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THE
TRADE UNION MOVEMENT
IN
SOVIET RUSSIA

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P R E F A C E

For the purposes of the Tenth Session of the International Labour Conference, which met in May and June 1927, the International Labour Office prepared a comparative study of the situation in various countries as regards freedom of association, this question being one of the items on the Agenda of the Conference. In the course of this work it became evident that, so far as Russia was concerned, it was impossible to treat the subject on the general plan adopted for other countries, and that a simple comparison, restricted by the limits of this plan, between the legal status of workers' associations in the U.S.S.R. and that of the trade unions in other countries might result in misleading readers not fully cognisant with the fundamental principles of Soviet trade unionism.

In Russia, the very conception of trade unionism and all that it includes (organisation of unions, position in the State, various activities and duties in connection with the protection of working class interests and the political and economic life of the country, etc.) depend so directly upon the doctrines of the Soviet regime, that they can only be made intelligible by a full, systematic, and separate description. Any direct comparison with other countries, in fact, so far from elucidating the matter would merely cloud the issue. It is for these reasons that the present study has been compiled.

The first Part of the volume is devoted to an account of the trade union theories professed by the Russian Communist Party, and on which, in principle, the whole organisation and activity of the Soviet trade unions are based.

But the theories of the Communist Party were only applied with anything like completeness during the "Communist period", that is to say, from 1917 to 1921. After the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP), actual practice departed from theory both in the organisation of the trade unions and in their economic and social activities. In view of this, it has been thought advisable, in the

second and third Parts of this study, which deal with the organisation and activities of the trade unions, to distinguish between the Communist period and that of the NEP.

It has been no part of our purpose to make a complete and detailed analysis of the economic, social, and political conditions of the working classes of the U.S.S.R. Questions connected with conditions of labour, wages, unemployment, social insurance, protection of labour, etc., have accordingly been treated solely in their relation to trade union policy, and information concerning the position of the working classes is given only so far as is necessary to illustrate the results of the economic and social policy of the trade unions. Readers desirous of obtaining full and more precise data on the living and working conditions of the masses in Russia may be referred to the works and articles already published by the International Labour Office, a list of which is to be found in Appendix I (p. 263) of this volume.

The present study is based on a wide range of sources, chief among them being documents received by an exchange arrangement from the All-Russian Central Trade Union Council and the central committees of various unions. For information relating to the latest developments, however, we have had to rely, in the absence of verbatim records of the Seventh Trade Union Congress, on reports published in the daily Press.

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PART I

**THE COMMUNIST THEORY OF TRADE UNIONISM
AND ITS APPLICATION**

CHAPTER I

THE COMMUNIST THEORY OF TRADE UNIONISM

The Communist theory of trade unionism presents two distinct aspects, which differ according to whether action is contemplated under a capitalist or under a proletarian regime. As will be seen later, the two variants merge into one when trade union organisation is under consideration, although the aims pursued in the two cases still remain different.

In view of this analogy and in order to avoid confusion, it is necessary to give a separate analysis of the two aspects of the Communist theory.

§ 1. — Under a Capitalist Regime

The evolution by the Bolsheviks of a trade union policy applicable to a capitalist period took place only after the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia, as Bolshevik experience in trade union matters had been very restricted under the Czarist regime. Although many trade unions had come into being during the revolutionary period of 1905-1906, their life had generally been of short duration. Under the Provisional Government of February-October 1917, the Bolsheviks had but one purpose, namely, to abolish the capitalist system. Having made use of the trade unions to obtain this object, they next endeavoured to impose on the workers' organisations abroad the methods which had succeeded in Russia.

Thus it is that, in any quest for information on the Communist theory of trade unionism, one has to turn to the plans of the Moscow International of Red Trade Unions, when the methods to be adopted under capitalism become evident.

REVOLUTIONARY AIMS OF TRADE UNIONISM

The primary argument advanced by the Communist theory is that the capitalist era has outlived its period of peaceful organic development. During this period the task of the unions was conceived as follows :

To organise the masses with a view to the improvement of their material situation and conditions of labour in general, and to progress towards the creation of a socialist regime ¹.

The world war, it was said, has hastened the dissolution and decomposition of capitalist society. The moment is opportune for social revolution, and the trade unions must take advantage of it. The *raison d'être* of the trade unions is now revolution :

It is the duty of the revolutionary trade unions to unite, discipline, and educate the masses, with a view to the abolition of capitalism ².

These conceptions are opposed by the Communists to those of the social reformers, who believe " that it is possible to evolve slowly from capitalism to socialism by a transformation of the democracy " ³

Bolshevik trade unionism therefore rejects both the Anglo-Saxon and the Austro-Germanic conceptions of trade union principles. The Communists analyse these two different conceptions of socialism as follows :

The characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon movement are summed up in a narrow corporateness, a non-political outlook, a neutral attitude towards the Socialist Party, and a concentration of efforts on immediate and concrete problems.

Labour and capital are considered by the unions not as irrevocably opposed to each other, but as two factors of society completing each other, and of which the development would lead to the equitable distribution of public and social wealth among all the elements of society.

The Austro-Germanic movement was impregnated with socialist ideas from its inception. But the social-democratic tactics of the movement tend to give it a social reformist character.

From a purely trade union point of view the reformist system tends to keep the trade unions far apart from political and revolutionary action, to make them advocates of neutrality towards revolutionary socialism, and to establish close bonds with the reformist movement. Briefly,

¹ *Resolutions and Statutes adopted by the First International Congress of Revolutionary Trade Unions*, p. 20.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³ *Idem.*

this movement leads to the creation of social conditions which allow of the establishment of equality in social and political domains between workers and employers, while preserving the system of employment of man by his fellow-men ¹.

Before the war still another form of the movement existed: revolutionary trade unionism. The Communists are desirous of preserving in the ideology of this movement its revolutionary characteristics.

Revolutionary trade unionism proclaimed—and herein lies its merit—a number of ideas which showed it to be on a higher level than the other forms of the trade union movement, and which likened it to revolutionary socialism. The ideas of direct action, pressure brought to bear on capital and the State by the masses, and the overthrow of capitalism by social revolution, do great honour to the revolutionary trade unions, and constitute the practical side of their general principles ².

This general point of view was expressed by Mr. Lozovsky in the following terms:

This movement (the movement of the Russian type) is, above all, Communist in its essence, tactics, methods of combat, and its aims, although officially it remains politically independent. The movement is supposed only to follow the ideological policy given by the Communist Party. It differs from British trade unionism in that it has never at any period been a purely economic, purely corporate movement; our movement has always been essentially a class movement. Again, it differs from the reformist theory in that it has never aimed at a gradual evolution from capitalism to socialism. And it differs from anarcho-syndicalism in that it is not opposed to the State in the abstract metaphysical meaning of the word. The only State to which Russian trade unionism is opposed is the bourgeois State . . . It is not the form, but rather the composition of the State which interests it . . . Our movement has adopted from other forms of trade unionism all that was strongest in them, all that was really revolutionary. Thus it is that we can agree with the anarcho-syndicalists concerning class aims, the revolutionary tactics to be adopted, and the direct action of one class against another. At the same time, however, we see eye to eye with the Germanic trade unions as far as centralisation is concerned, when this is understood as a maximum concentration of our forces. We have much less in common with Anglo-Saxon trade union principles, and perhaps only with the tenacity with which those unions lead an economic struggle ³.

NO PARTY NEUTRALITY

The logical consequence of what has been said is that trade unions seeking revolution must find allies in the struggle they have

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³ LOZOVSKY: *The Universal Trade Union Movement before and after the War*, pp. 24-25.

taken up. The most natural allies must always be the revolutionary organisations. For the Communist, however, the sole revolutionary party is the Communist Party, and all other organisations are considered to be purely reformist, and not aiming at revolution :

Socialism has now abandoned the narrow circle of abstract theoretical controversy, and stands before the working classes as a problem requiring a practical solution. All workers' organisations must take up a definite policy as regards this problem. To ignore class demands is equivalent to forcing the organisations to become mere spectators in the struggle and traitors to the cause. The object of the revolutionary unions is the overthrow of capitalism and the organisation of the socialist regime ; this is equally the aim of the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the Communist Party. The two organisations cannot conduct a successful campaign unless they unite closely and support each other mutually ¹.

It is clear from this quotation how the Communists solve the question of collaboration between political parties and workers' organisations, a question which had already arisen at the International Socialist Conference held in Stuttgart in 1907. That Conference adopted a resolution stating that: "The working classes in all countries must organise and strengthen the relations between the party and the unions." But in many countries ², and especially in

¹ *Resolutions and Statutes adopted by the First International Congress of Revolutionary Trade Unions*, p. 28.

² In Russia the question of the attitude to be adopted by the trade unions towards political parties had long been a subject of controversy. The Workers' Social-Democratic Party had, since the 'nineties, changed their opinion on this matter several times. Up till 1903, Plehkanov and Lenin were agreed as to the maintenance of the political neutrality of the unions. During the revolutionary period of 1905-1906 the political and economic organisations combined their efforts to oppose the existing political regime, and the majority of the newly created unions were formed and managed by members of the Social-Democratic Party. At the Congress of Stockholm (April 1906) the two wings of the party agreed in recognising that "the party organisations should help in the formation of trade unions of a non-political character". At the same time the members of the party were "to work unremittingly to promote ideas of unity and class consciousness among the masses, to participate in the work of the unions, and to introduce discussion of questions concerning the trade union movement, basing themselves the while on the interests of the party". In order to carry out this idea, a trade union committee attached to the central committee of the party was formed with a view to co-ordinating the activities of the social-democrats in the trade unions, and to establish a general party policy on all trade union questions.

Even at that period the Bolshevik left wing of the Social-Democratic Party was endeavouring to gain control over the trade union movement. The Mensheviks, led by Martov, desired to adhere strictly to the formation of trade unions having complete political independence. The two opposing forces, however, made use of the same formulae : the resolution

the Anglo-Saxon ones, the unions were afraid of losing their independence, so the resolution went on to state that the two organisations "had each their own sphere of action, where they could act in all independence".

The idea of neutrality is, however, refuted most energetically by the Communists.

The revolutionary socialists have always been hostile to the idea of trade union neutrality, and the independence of the revolutionary proletariat, knowing full well that under the names of neutrality and independence towards revolutionary socialism was concealed the bourgeois and reformist idea of separating political action from the economic struggle of the proletariat.

For this reason the idea of the independence of the trade union movement must be energetically and resolutely rejected¹.

Thus, in spite of their sympathy for the ideology of the revolutionary trade unionism of the Latin countries, the Communists condemn it equally, inasmuch as it admits "the idea of independence and neutrality towards all political parties, including the political party of the proletariat"².

According to the Communists "the revolutionary trade unions must march shoulder to shoulder, and maintain the closest collaboration and union with the Communist Party of their country"³.

ORGANISATION OF TRADE UNIONS BY INDUSTRIES

The Communists assert that trade unionism by crafts has shown itself to be defective when it is necessary to resort to direct

of Stockholm, which is quoted above, that of the Congress of London (April-May 1907), which was almost a complete reproduction of the Stockholm resolution, and that of the International Congress of Stuttgart (August 1907), which, in addition to the two principles already enunciated, declared that: "In its ever-increasing sphere of influence, the class struggle could only bear fruit if there was unity between the two forms of organisation (political and economic)."

From the beginning of 1907 two distinct policies separated the two ideas. The Mensheviks asserted that the only way to avoid dissolution of the unions by the police was to make it clear that the unions had no connection with political organisations, while the Bolsheviks, on the contrary, made use of every incident to "temper" the revolutionary spirit of the working classes and to prepare the overthrow of the political regime. But up to 1917 all this controversy had very little practical bearing, as the Russian trade union movement was confined within very narrow limits.

¹ *Resolutions and Statutes adopted by the First International Congress of Revolutionary Trade Unions*, p. 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

action against the forces of capitalism. The capitalists, they say, understood before the workers the importance of co-ordinating their efforts, and formed employers' associations having immense resources at their disposal. These associations were organised according to the different branches of national production, and the workers, if they are to meet the employers on level ground, must adopt similar tactics. If the workers of any given undertaking do not all form part of the same union, there is increased tendency to "blacklegging" when strikes arise. The employer who does not feel himself opposed by the combined force of his workers generally succeeds in imposing his will on the separate elements in his employment. It cannot be doubted that the adhesion of workers of the same undertaking to different unions diminishes their combative power :

The question of outstanding importance is to convert the craft unions into industrial unions. "One undertaking, one union" must be the motto of the revolutionary trade unions. By this system all classes of workers in an undertaking or factory will form a compact group in face of the employers ¹.

Such is the theory, of which the factory committee (a child of the Russian revolution) is the concrete realisation.

Each factory, each work, must become a bastion of the revolutionary fortress. The old form of liaison between the members and their union (collectors, representatives, men and women of confidence) no longer suffices, and every endeavour must be made to create trade unions on the lines of factory committees ².

§ 2. — Under a Proletarian Regime

Immediately after the *coup d'Etat* of November 1917 the Communists declared that the part played by the trade unions must undergo a complete change :

The October revolution, which has torn the power from the middle classes and placed it in the hands of the working and peasant masses, has created entirely new conditions for all the workers' organisations, and more especially for the trade unions ³.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

² *Idem.*

³ *Verbatim Report of the First All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions* (Jan. 1918), p. 364.

It should be pointed out that on this point the Bolsheviks were criticised by the Mensheviks, who energetically denied that any change

As a basis for the new rôle of the trade union movement the Communists adopted the view that the working class is master of the political and economic life of the country, and is therefore its own employer. The result of this conception on the future rôle of the organisations already existing will be seen in what follows.

THE PRINCIPLE OF NATIONALISATION OF THE TRADE UNIONS

The aim of their activities having undergone a complete change, the trade unions can no longer be considered as instruments of destruction; in future they are constructive bodies with a positive rôle in the framework of the State :

After the political revolution the trade unions must take up a central position in politics and in a certain sense they must even become the main political organisation. They become the founder of the new society. . . . The socialist revolution can only be accomplished by the active, immediate, and practical collaboration of millions of individuals in the Government of the State. . . . The trade unions must educate the masses and lead them to share in the government of the country. That is why *nationalisation of the trade unions is inevitable* ¹.

The trade unions are thus to be the organisers of the working class in the new society. Their position in the State presents certain analogies to that of the co-operative organisations, which

of relationship between capital and labour was possible under the existing conditions. A draft resolution submitted by them to the Congress stated :

The present revolution is not socialist but bourgeois, and any social conquests made by the workers can in no way alter the basis of the capitalist system . . . The Russian proletariat must continue to carry on a stern fight against all forms of capitalism in order to improve its economic position in the structure of the bourgeois society, and ultimately to free itself from it completely by the installation of the socialist regime.

Thus the Mensheviks desired, at least during the transition period between capitalism and the advent of socialism, to retain for the trade unions the rôle of organisations of economic resistance to the employers. This proposal was answered by the Bolshevik resolution, which was adopted by the Congress as follows :

The Social Revolutionary Party has never considered the trade unions as simple weapons of combat to be used to obtain an improvement of the conditions of the working classes under a capitalist regime. It has always thought that it was the duty of the trade unions to fight side by side with the other organisations of the working classes to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, and to hasten the advent of socialism . . . (*ibid.*, p. 122)

¹ Statement by Lenin at the Second Trade Union Congress, (*Verbatim Report*, p. 31).

are destined to play an important part in the distribution of products. Trade unions and co-operative societies are among the rare institutions which will not only survive the destruction of capitalism but will even acquire an added importance by it. Certain Communists compare the mission of the trade unions in the proletarian society to that of the chambers of commerce and employers' organisations under the capitalist system. According to them, it is only a question of organising between the unions and the State a collaboration as close as that which exists between the employers' organisations and the State under capitalism :

Let us remember what brought the upper classes their greatest triumphs. They set up a system of State capitalism, associating closely with the State power all other organisations, and especially those of an economic character (syndicates, trusts and consortiums). In order to carry its campaign against capitalism to a victorious conclusion, the proletariat must centralise its organisations in like manner. It already possesses councils of deputies as organs of State ; it has trade unions and co-operative organisations at its disposal. But it is obvious that these organisations must all be linked up so that there will be complete unity of action. To what central body are the various organisations to be joined, is then the natural query, and to this the Communists reply : The strongest and most powerful organisation must be chosen as the central institution and this is to be found in the State organisation of the working classes or, in other words, the *Soviet power*. Therefore the trade unions and co-operative organisations must *transform themselves into economic sections and organs of the State power ; that is to say, they must undergo a process of nationalisation*¹.

And thus at once the Communist train of thought becomes clear. Assuming it to be a fact that under capitalism the whole policy of State is dictated by large financial and commercial interests and employers' organisations, the Communists come to the conclusion that under the new order the workers' economic organisations must take part in the management of the State, not only *de facto* but *de jure*. Under the new system these organisations are to have a special legal status.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE UNIONS

Above all the Communists desire to avoid the growth of indifference among the trade unions to the proletarian revolution. Their reasoning is simple : It is the workers who have carried out the

¹ BUKHARIN and PREOBRAZHENSKY ; *The A.B.C. of Communism* (French edition), p. 280.

revolution, and therefore the workers' organisations must favour it in every way and lend their aid to the Government which has been created by the revolution.

The necessity for a common effort being recognised, the trade unions must abandon all ideas of neutrality towards the new regime as represented by the party in power. This idea was clearly embodied in a resolution adopted at the First Trade Union Congress held in January 1917, as follows:

The idea of the neutrality of the trade unions has always been and still is a middle-class theory. There can be no question of such neutrality in the grand historical struggle between revolutionary socialism and its opponents. Those who, in the course of speeches, make themselves out to be neutral, are, generally, when it comes to acts, a source of strength to the bourgeoisie, and traitors to the working classes. All revolutionary socialists must definitely break with the idea of trade union neutrality¹.

From this moment the Bolshevik policy towards the trade unions is definitely established. The Communist Party and the unions have identical interests and must support each other mutually, act in concert, and sink or swim together. The resolution of the First Congress, already quoted, further declares:

All questions raised during the revolution are of direct interest to the trade unions whether they concern the nationalisation of banks,

¹ *Verbatim Report of the First Congress*, p. 344.

The last phrase of the resolution is a direct threat to the Mensheviks and a warning to all unions inclined to follow their doctrines. In his report to the Congress, Zinoviev accused the supporters of neutrality and independence of playing more or less knowingly into the hands of counter-revolutionary parties. "What, indeed," he asked, "is this independence, and from whom do you desire to be independent? Is it from your chosen Government, your Workers' and Peasants' Government, your Soviets of Workers and Peasants that you would be independent? We also want independence, but it is with the bourgeoisie that we wish to break. We have overthrown the power of the middle classes, and now when the workers and peasant masses have succeeded in giving the power to the proletariat and when your own unions form a part of the Government, what is the use of talking of independence? This independence may have a meaning for the adherents of the right wing who, many of them, would wish trade unions to be independent of the Soviets of Workers and Peasants in order that they might help and sustain those who are actively opposing the Workers' and Peasants' Government and those who, in the name of the sacred right to strike, are striking against the working classes. . . . I am sure that among the militant trade unionists there is not one single person who will allow the middle classes, our most deadly enemy, to stab us in the back: and yet these allow this to be done in the name of the right to strike and of freedom of association."

the struggle against the middle-class press, the cancellation of debts, or the suppression of counter-revolution. In each and every one of these questions, the trade unions must collaborate wholeheartedly with the policy of the Soviet power as laid down by the Council of People's Commissaries ¹.

In 1919 the second congress pointed out in no indirect manner that the unions " participating in all branches of Soviet activity . . . must educate and prepare the masses to control not only national production, but also the whole organisation of State " ²

In 1920 Lenin, referring to the formula of Karl Marx, that the trade unions must be the school of socialism, described the Russian unions as " the school of Communism for the working masses " ³.

The underlying meaning of this is for the moment that the trade unions must search among the masses for persons capable of becoming organisers and administrators. But this is only the initial idea. Little by little the unions must take steps to ensure that all workers receive tuition which will interest them in politics. It is the working classes that are to hold the reins of Government. But it is obvious that, if the working classes do not furnish fresh units to the Communist Party, the objects of the proletarian revolution will not have been attained. Therefore millions of workers must be educated with a view to taking part in the administration of the country. This result can only be obtained through the trade unions, whose duty it is to develop the class consciousness of the workers, to raise their intellectual standard, and to encourage them to take their proper place in the socialist, or rather Communist, society. It is in this sense that the trade unions must become the school of Communism.

TRADE UNION ORGANISATION

The Exclusiveness of the Communist Trade Unions

The " Programme of the Communist Party " adopted in March 1920 by the Eighth Congress makes no special mention of the relations of the party with the trade unions. The statutes of the Party were adopted in 1922, but the spirit of these statutes was already

¹ *Verbatim Report of the First Congress*, p. 364.

² *Verbatim Report of the Second Congress*, p. 108.

³ *Verbatim Report of the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party*,

in being in 1919. Under the heading "Central Party Organisations" it is laid down that "the Central Committee of the Party shall direct the work of the Central Soviet and public organisations by means of Communist 'cells' " ¹.

No mention of trade union organisations is as yet made, but the intention is clearly understood. Under the heading "Departmental Organisations" more precision is used, and it is stated that "the Departmental Committee of the Communist Party shall direct the activities of the Inter-Trade Union Council" ². The district organisations were dealt with in like manner. Again the statutes state that "in all non-party organisations (Soviets, trade unions, etc.), including at least three members of the party, there must be formed a Communist nucleus which will be required to develop the interests of the party, to introduce the party policy in independent circles, and to ensure party control over the activities of the organisation in question" ³.

These instructions were in the first instance meant for the use of the leaders of the Communist Party. But in 1920, when the Communists believed themselves to be definite masters of the trade union movement, they made them public at the Trade Union Congress when the following resolution was adopted:

The trade unions as a body, while being neutral organisations uniting the workers irrespective of their political and denominational convictions but supporting the achievement of Communism by the dictatorship of the proletariat, have in all their activities throughout the period of revolution unhesitatingly obeyed the supreme authority of the proletarian revolution, namely, the Communist Party ⁴.

At the ninth congress of the Communist Party held some days later (March 1920), Bucharin, the reporter on the trade union question, described the Communist point of view with the greatest precision:

Our party differs from the others inasmuch as it is the organised advance guard of the proletariat. . . . There is absolutely nothing to prevent the existence of an organisation like the Menshevik Union of the Moscow Printing Trades, but it would be deplorable if such an organisation secured a preponderance throughout the various branches of

¹ *Programme and Statutes of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*, p. 159.

² *Ibid.*, p. 164.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁴ *Verbatim Report of the Third Trade Union Congress*, p. 74.

the working-class movement, and more especially in the trade unions. That is why, during the struggle carried on under the capitalist regime, while having regard to the political independence of the trade unions . . . we were desirous that they should be directed by the Communist Party. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, our attitude changes only in so far as concerns the functions of the unions, for we maintain that the trade union movement can only bear fruit if it is led by the Communist Party ¹.

And it is this latter idea which forms the substance of the resolution adopted by the congress :

The dictatorship of the proletariat and the evolution of socialism are only possible if the trade unions which are nominally non-political organisations become in reality Communist and adopt the policy of the Communist Party ².

From a practical point of view, the Ninth Congress recommended the formation of Communist "cells" mentioned above.

In 1921 the Tenth Congress insisted on the necessity of choosing the leaders of the trade union movement :

In filling the managerial positions in the trade union movement with experienced organisers and economists ³ imbued with the importance of economic questions, the party must see that the candidates are devoted adherents to Communism ⁴.

One Union for Each Branch of Industry

As regards the internal organisation of the unions, the Communist formula is identical for the proletarian and capitalist systems alike and conceives an industrial trade union formed elementarily and exclusively in each undertaking; but the aim of the union is no longer the same. Whereas under the capitalist system the union is supposed to combat capital, under the proletarian regime its duty is to co-ordinate the trade union movement with the State institutions.

The identity of the methods advocated is explained, moreover, by the fact that the Communists have adopted practically unchanged the bulk of the principles laid down by the Third Trade Union Congress held in July 1917. According to the resolution

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

² *Ibid.*, p. 385.

³ *Khoziaistvennik*, an official specialised in questions of economic administration.

⁴ *Verbatim Report of the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party*,

adopted by that conference trade union structure was defined as follows :

The evolution of the economic struggle requires that the workers shall form organisations which, basing themselves on the interdependence of the various categories of workers employed in industry, will group the largest possible number of workers engaged in the same or allied branches in a common organisation and under one management.

The workers must therefore organise themselves not by workshop, or craft but by industry (production), so that a union will include all the workers in a given undertaking, even when they are exercising different trades and producing different articles¹.

This idea formed the basis of discussion at the First Trade Union Congress in January 1918, and was expressed at the Second Congress, in January 1919, by Tomski, as follows: "One undertaking, one union."

In addition to the idea of organisation by undertakings, the Communists desired the movement to be all inclusive :

... The All-Russian Trade Union of Workers and Employees, repudiating the forms of structure founded on considerations of a purely occupational, national or denominational character, are endeavouring to unite all workers, irrespective of their political or religious convictions, in a single trade union of production. This union is to be not only Russian but universal, and all members will be subject to trade union and proletarian labour discipline.

Another feature of the Communist trade union plan is to lead all workers to become members of a union and thus to force them, by means of trade union discipline, to execute work ordered by the State :

The disorganisation pertaining to the former system is a thing of the past. A new fraternal labour discipline is being formed, created, and maintained, not by the big whip of the capitalist, but by the workers' organisations themselves and by the factory committees and trade unions.

The principle of universality of the trade unions was enunciated for the first time at the Second Congress :

In their endeavours to improve the economic situation of the workers, trade unionists and non-unionists alike, accepting the responsibility for the smooth working of undertakings and establishments, for the maintenance of labour discipline among the workers, and for the observance

¹ *Guide to the All-Russian Congresses and Conferences of Trade Unions*, p. 54.

² *The A.B.C. of Communism*, p. 287.

of trade union decisions concerning wages and output, must endeavour to introduce compulsory membership of the unions in all undertakings and establishments, by decisions taken by general assemblies of the workers ¹.

The rigidity of the Communist conception of trade union organisation thus becomes clearly evident. There can only be, according to them, one form of trade union, and this union must include all workers in a given domain. From the moment he becomes a wage earner, an individual may not retain complete liberty of action, but must join a union and follow the union's policy.

In short, the Communists reverse the conception of freedom of association generally accepted in present-day States. They proclaim, not that a worker has the right to join a union, but that it is his duty to do so.

The Principle of Centralisation

As trade union organisation must be in accord with the general structure of the State, so it must be centralised to the highest degree. Centralisation by means of close relationship between the unions of the various branches of industry was, from the beginning of the October revolution, considered as a necessity not bearing discussion, and this idea was definitely announced in a resolution adopted by the Third Inter-Trade Union Conference held in July 1917. This resolution stated that:

In order to conduct a successful economic campaign, the trade union movement must be organised on the principle of democratic centralisation, which will allow each member to take part in the work of organisation and which will ensure unity of command in the economic struggle.

In order to promote the interests common to all trade unionists, to facilitate the taking of steps of an inter-union character, and to provide mutual support in fundamental cases, inter-trade union organisations, local, regional, and all-Russian, must be set up ².

The trade union sections, the organs of the movement in the large towns, cannot act independently in economic matters, and must in all cases conform with the decisions of delegates specially appointed to deal with economic matters.

¹ *Report of the Second Congress*, p. 126.

² The Conference even went the length of immediately electing an All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, which was called on to play a most important part in the economic life and policy of Soviet Russia

The ideal of centralisation, especially as regards trade union finance, was announced by the First Trade Union Congress as follows:

. . . Now that co-ordination between the various branches of industry is more or less achieved and that the network of unions extends to the most distant parts of the country, it is most essential that the local trade union sections should be subordinated to the central unions organised on an industrial basis.

In order to develop mutual relations between the sections and centres, it is desirable to transfer all contributions to the central management, which will provide for the requirements of the local sections¹.

It will be seen later that the theory of centralisation went still further and that the ultimate aim of the Communists was to create a single central organisation grouping all workers irrespective of the branch of industry to which they belonged. In other words only one big union (*ediny soyuz*) was to exist in the proletarian State.

According to the Communist theory, the Russian trade unions are fundamental organs of the Soviet State. Their work is intended to strengthen the position of the State, and their whole organisation is based on these aims.

Herein it is that the Russian trade union movement differs completely from all other trade union movements. Whereas in all modern countries the trade union may be conceived as a creation of the workers united by economic interests, in Russia it can only, and does only, exist as an integral part of the State mechanism. From this it is easy to deduce the relationship between the trade union movement, and the actual authorities, i.e. the Communist Party. And it also follows that the situation of and the part played by the unions in State affairs varies with the general policy of the Communist Party.

As regards the relationship between the unions and the Communist Party, the policy has always been to promote Communism in the unions. It will be seen in the first part of the next chapter how this object has been continuously pursued ever since 1917.

Although the idea of nationalising the trade unions has never at any moment been abandoned, circumstances have forced the Communist Party to make many deviations from their initial scheme, and these deviations have become more important since

¹ *Verbatim Report of the First Conference*, p. 374.

the introduction of the new economic policy (NEP). It is for this reason that the study of this subject which forms the second part of the following chapter includes two phases : one corresponding to the period of Communism (sometimes called the militant Communist period), and the other to the NEP.

The same division—Communist period and NEP—recurs in the chapters which contain a more detailed account of the work accomplished by the trade unions in economic and social domains.

CHAPTER II

APPLICATION OF THE COMMUNIST THEORY OF TRADE UNIONISM

§ 1. — The Unions and the Communist Party

THE CONFLICT OF TENDENCIES UP TO OCTOBER 1917

From the very first days of the revolution of February 1917, the movement for the organisation of the working classes showed astonishing vitality.

Using the few existing unions as centres, large associations sprang up in the various districts. Thus, for example, the membership of the Moscow Metal Workers' Union increased to over 16,000 by the end of March 1917, and in March and April 74 organisations had been set up covering the various trades and industries. The real wave of spontaneous organisation showed itself everywhere in the form of factory committees (*fabrichno-zavodskie komitety*). According to explanations given by the Bolsheviki, it would seem that in many cases the committees were formed in the following manner :

During the memorable days of February and March, the workers left the factories and works and paraded the streets. . . . When, a few days later, they returned, they found that many of the undertakings had been abandoned, and that the management, engineers, technical staff, and foremen, fearing violence from the workers, had fled. As work had to go on even without the management, the workers proceeded to elect the factory committees¹

This procedure was rapidly followed in most of the undertakings so that the workers might present a united block against the

¹ SENIUSHKIN : *Factory Committees in Russia* (in Russian), p. 8.

employers, and from this moment the factory committee, " offspring of the revolution ", became the preferred medium of Bolshevik propaganda ¹.

Two tendencies were therefore to be observed in the Russian trade union movement from the beginning of the revolution. On the one hand there were the Mensheviks, whose chief aim was to organise powerful trade unions capable of introducing discipline in the economic struggle of the working classes, as it was considered that if this was carried on without any co-operation between the various undertakings, the whole movement would be likely to end in anarchy. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks were endeavouring to create purely revolutionary organisations which would prepare the workers for future action.

Nevertheless, in spite of a fundamentally different conception of tactics, the two different types of organisation had of necessity the same economic aims in view. This resemblance became evident when councils of factory committees were formed, as the object of these bodies was to direct the economic struggle of the entire working classes, which was also the aim of the trade unions properly so called.

The question of subordinating the factory committees to the trade unions was actually considered at the first Conference of Factory Committees held on 30 May 1917, but the Bolsheviks had no intention of thus playing into the hands of the Mensheviks, and the proposal was rejected on the ground of the " excessive weakness of the unions " ².

Although the struggle between the two factions was still going on when the October revolution broke out, this had in no way prevented the organisation of the workers from becoming a vast and far-reaching movement.

It is, however, impossible to give any reliable information concerning this movement during the first few months of the revolution. All that can be said is that it represented a vast unorganised power without definite aims, but one which was nevertheless redoubtable, as was shown during October when the Bolsheviks used it to overthrow the Provisional Government. At that moment " the trade unions were in the vanguard of the fight against the Provisional

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Government. . . . Trade unions and factory committees formed the 'red guard' and dealt with all armed opposition"¹. It became obvious that as a result of Bolshevik propaganda the control of the workingclass movement had slipped between the fingers of the right wing Socialist Party :

" I do not wish to conceal ", stated a member of the Central Committee of the United Social Democratic Party at the First Trade Union Congress held in January 1918, " that during the last six months the great majority of the workers have changed their outlook and are now steeped in Bolshevik formulae . . . " ²

THE GRASP ON THE UNIONS

From the month of November 1917, the Bolsheviks, who already had control of the majority of the factory committees, were endeavouring to seize the management of the trade union movement. Until then it was the right wing socialists who had organised the trade unions, and for the most part the Mensheviks held the majority in the factory committees.

At the Third Trade Union Conference held in June 1917 (this conference was attended by 220 delegates with full voting powers and 27 in a consultative capacity, representing altogether 167 unions and 51 trade union offices), the right wing group, composed of Mensheviks, Revolutionary Socialists, Bundists, etc., still had a majority of 15 to 20 votes over the left wing group formed by Bolsheviks and Internationalists. The All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions elected by this Conference was composed of five Mensheviks and four Bolsheviks.

At the First Congress (January 1918) the Bolsheviks had a strong majority — 281 votes out of 428 — but, as may be seen from the following table, the majority of the Bolsheviks were delegates from local organisations :

¹ ROSENFELD : *History of the Trade Union Movement in Russia* (in Russian), p. 47.

² *Verbatim Report of the First Trade Union Congress*, p. 133.

DISTRIBUTION OF VOTES AT THE CONGRESS OF JANUARY 1918 ¹

Organisations	Bolsheviks	Men-sheviks	Social Revolutionaries		Independents	Anarchists and others
			Right wing	Left wing		
Central federations	9	12	1	3	5	—
Regional federations	12	9	—	—	5	—
Local federations	28	12	1	5	1	1
Local trade unions	232	34	8	13	26	11
Total . . .	281	67	10	21	37	12

¹ According to the report of the credentials committee of the First Congress, representation does not appear to have been arranged on any definite basis. Some towns, as Reval, for example, sent one inter-trade union representative, while others much more important, as Odessa, did not send any. The Northern district, including 551,000 trade unionists, sent 13 inter-union delegates, while the central industrial districts, with 770,000 trade unionists, sent only 12. Quite the contrary, however, is to be seen in the representation of the local unions in the two districts, the North sending 33 delegates and the Centre 110. It is impossible to state how the elections were carried out, and the Minutes of the congress contained no trace of any discussion of the report of the Credentials Committee. Nevertheless, there must have been difficulties regarding the credentials of certain delegates.

During the first sitting of the congress, after an address of welcome pronounced by Riazanov on behalf of the Inter-Trade Union Council of Petrograd, a member of the executive of the congress called out: "By whom were you delegated?" (*Verbatim Report of the First Congress*, pp. 132-131 and 338.)

This majority enabled the Communists to force the congress to adopt the main features of their trade union programme and allowed them to elect their candidates to the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions.

Political Strife in the Unions

During 1918 the Communist Party did all in its power to impose its representatives on the executive bodies of the trade unions. In all trade union executive bodies Communist sections were formed, and these gradually supplanted the executives, and various reasons were found to dissolve the unions or attach them compulsorily to other unions.

In the unions of railway employees, the struggle between the *Vceprofjhel* (All-Russian Federation of Railway Employees' Trade Unions) and the *Vikjedor* (Central Executive Railway Committee), which was in charge of railway administration, lasted throughout 1918. By Decree of 22 March, the Government re-established the system of single management on the railways, and the Commissary of Railways took the opportunity of dissolving the railway workers' executive committees, notably on the Murmansk line, and stopped payment of overtime¹. The *Vikjedor*, which had consented to the re-establishment of individual management, then found itself in a difficult position between the unions and the Commissariat of Transport.

Further difficulties arose in June when it was necessary to establish wage rates on the railways. The *Vikjedor* organised an intense campaign against the members of the *Vceprofjhel*, when it endeavoured to get the railwaymen to go on strike.

Finally, the transport workers found themselves in direct opposition to the theory of centralisation advocated by the Communist Party. There still existed numerous unions of railway employees, but these were craft unions affiliated or non-affiliated to the *Vceprofjhel*.

Thus, even at the end of 1918, the Communist Party still found itself helpless in face of the Federation of Railwaymen's Unions. At the beginning of 1919, during the First Railwaymen's Congress (21 February), "the supporters of the federal and central systems of organisation came to terms, and from that moment the All-Russian Central Committee of Railway Workers and Employees included 30 members, of whom 17 were Communists, 8 Independents, and 5 Internationalists"².

Shortly afterwards the railway staffs were mobilised and, in spite of some opposition from the trade unions, the political management of the railways was strong enough to crush all resistance.

At the Second Congress of Trade Unions protests were raised against the suppression of the employees' unions. As a matter of fact, the employees had from the beginning of the October revolution taken up a position against the Bolsheviks, and the bank and public

¹ *Documents of the First All-Russian Conference of Communist Railwaymen, 24-25 October 1915: Report of the President, PIATNITSKY.*

² *Report of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, 1919, p. 230.*

administration officials had even gone on strike. Little by little, however, the Bolsheviks had gathered the lower-grade employees together and formed them into separate unions. Thus, from the beginning of 1918 there were two sorts of employees' unions, Menshevik and Bolshevik. Up to February 1919 the Menshevik unions had a larger membership but shortly afterwards, in May 1919, the Bolsheviks managed to get the Second All-Russian Congress of Employees to elect a central committee composed of twelve Communists, 6 Independents, and 3 Internationalists. As a result of this the Menshevik unions disappeared.

During 1919 similar events took place in other trades. In the printers' union the conflict was most violent. The All-Russian Printers' Trade Union, although affiliated to the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, maintained a certain amount of opposition to the Communist policy of that body. Thereupon the Central Council took steps to form, or at least to cause to be formed, "red" unions in opposition to the unions managed by the Mensheviks. By May 1919 these unions had become so numerous that a congress of them was called. The Central Council at first refused to send delegates to this Congress, but eventually changed its opinion, stating that it had to recognise the scission which had taken place, but that it could take sides only after the congresses of the two opposing groups had been held. In the meantime the All-Russian Congress of "Red" Trade Unions was held, and a central committee for the Bolshevik printers' unions was nominated. The Central Trade Union Council then decided to convene a special conference of the two opposing elements. This conference was subsequently put off until 25 July and again to 15 August. The central committee of the Menshevik printers' union then lodged a complaint against the procedure adopted in the election of delegates in fifteen towns and demanded a further postponement of the congress. After consideration, this demand was refused by the Central Trade Union Council, the Congress of 15 August elected a new central committee composed of Communists and Independents, and the former Bolshevik central committee was declared to be abolished¹.

A similar conflict took place in the chemists' and railwaymen's unions. It should also be noted in this connection that the Central Trade Union Council also met with opposition from an inter-trade

¹ *Report of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, 1919,*

union organisation called the Ukrainian Trade Union Centre, negotiations with this body continuing until 1921.

It should further be pointed out that the methods of voting practised had a distinct result on the elections. In the majority of trade union statutes, as well as in the Rules for Factory Committees, it is stated that voting may be carried out by a show of hands or by a secret ballot. The choice between the two methods is left to the election committee of the union, which is also entrusted with all the polling arrangements, checking the votes and manner of voting and announcing the results of the poll ¹.

Where the Communists did not manage to get immediate control of the directorate of a union, they generally resorted to the system of creating "cells". One finds this system recommended as far back as 1918, and it is mentioned in an instruction issued by the First Conference of Communist Railwaymen held in Moscow in September of that year ². The statutes of the Communist Party adopted at the Eighth Party Congress mention the trade unions among the non-party organisations in which communist "cells" must be formed, "with a view to increasing the influence of the party, developing its policy and ensuring the control over all organisations" ³.

Numerical Results of Communist Penetration

An examination of the information relative to representation of the different parties at the various All-Russian Congresses of Trade Unions shows that the Communists rapidly achieved their purpose. The growth in Communist representation is shown in the following table :

	Total number of delegates	Percentage of communists
Third Conference, July 1917	220	36.4
First Congress, January 1918	416	65.6
Second " " 1919	748	60.0
Third " " 1920	1,229	78.1
Fourth " " 1921	2,357	82.9

No figures exist concerning the proportion of Communists in the executive bodies of the trade union organisations prior to 1921.

¹ *Guide to Trade Union Organisation* (Leather Workers' Union), pp. 14 and 17.

² *Documents of the First All-Russian Conference of Communist Railwaymen*, pp. 99 and 100.

³ *Statutes of the Communist Party*, Art. 60.

At that date a census ¹ shows that in the inter-union executives there were 2,126 militant members, of whom 67 per cent. were avowed Communists, 30 per cent. independents, the remaining 3 per cent. being made up of Mensheviks, social revolutionaries and anarchists. In 1922 the proportion of Communists was still higher, being 70.8 per cent. in March and 71.5 per cent. in June. At this period the members of the other parties gradually disappeared. In the provincial and district trade union executives, the percentage of Communists was 51.3 per cent. in 1922, while 48.7 per cent. were independents. In all the organisations covered by the census (which included 2,232 members) there were no more than seven representatives of the other parties, including one Menshevik and one social revolutionary.

This clearly demonstrates that from 1921 to 1922 the entire management of the trade union movement was in the Communists' hands. Notwithstanding this, the Communists did not consider their hold on the movement to be strong enough. Throughout the whole period from the autumn of 1921 to the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party, insistence was being laid on the necessity of purging the trade union ranks and imposing Communist executives on the movement. The Communist Party Conference of December 1921 decided that it was necessary to fill all the high administrative posts in the movement with convinced Communists of long and tried experience. What the Communists feared at that moment was the influence of the changed policy of the unions which followed the introduction of the NEP. As Andreev stated at the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party held in March 1922, the NEP had deprived the unions of their official duties, and many of the trade unionists thought only of wresting from the State the greatest amount of privileges for the workers. These trade unionists were, in many cases, Communists of recent conversion who were unable to distinguish between the interests of the various groups of workers and that of the working class as a whole. The older Communists found it necessary to oppose these tendencies. The Conference of December laid down the principle that trade union leaders had in future to be Communists who were affiliated to the party before October 1917. On 20 January 1922, a special committee was appointed

¹ *Verbatim Report of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions for 1921-1922*, pp. 91-92; *ibid.* for 1922, p. 26.

by the Central Committee of the party to study the situation, to indicate the necessary remedies, and even to carry out the necessary transfer of officials between the different organisations, Soviets, party organisations, trade unions, etc.

This committee began by examining the composition of the trade union central committees and it was found that out of 39 presidents and secretaries of central committees, only 19 had the necessary qualifications. Of the other 20, 18 were converts from other parties, i.e. former Mensheviks and social revolutionaries. In the praesidia of the central committees the situation was found to be still more serious from a Communist standpoint. Of the 140 persons examined by the committee, 34 had joined the party previous to 1917, 74 between 1917 and 1920, and 27 after 1920, while 60 were converts from other parties. Finally, of the 330 members of the central committees, 72 had joined the party before 1917, 211 between 1917 and 1920 and 47 after 1920, while 100 were converts from other parties.

In certain central committees there were hardly any Communists who had been party members prior to 1917, the P.T.T. Committee not having even one, while the woodworkers' committee had only one and that of the railwaymen and inland water transport workers (*Tsektran*) only six.

On examining the provincial organisations, the committee found that not more than half of the committee members fulfilled the conditions laid down by the December conference

The committee therefore came to the conclusion that the greater part of the administrative machinery of trade unionism required renewing:

It is obvious that for the present it is unnecessary to have recourse to official nominations. The militant Communists whom the party will choose to manage the union must first of all pass a certain time in the organisations in order to make themselves known and to acquire the necessary experience, after which they must be elected to a trade union executive by a Departmental Congress or at the next All-Russian Congress to the executive of a central committee ¹.

Finally, the Eleventh Congress determined that all presidents and secretaries of central committees must be communists with party affiliation prior to 1917; that members of the executive bodies of central committees, and presidents and secretaries of provincial inter-

¹ Statement by Andreev in the *Verbatim Report of the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party*, pp. 223-224.

union councils must complete a preliminary training of at least three years, and members of the executive bodies of provincial inter-union councils a preliminary period of at least two years.

This purging of the unions began at once and the results were shown in a report prepared for the Sixth Trade Union Congress held in 1924, and summarised below ¹:

CENTRAL COMMITTEES

The relative strength of the various parties in the central committees is shown in percentage in the following table :

Staff or committee	Communists affiliated to the party		Independents	Other parties
	Before Oct. 1917	After Oct. 1917		
Committee (Praesidium)				
at Fifth Congress (1922)	28.4	63.6	8.0	—
at Sixth „ (1924)	31.4	65.8	2.8	—
Complete committee				
at Fifth Congress (1922)	18.8	65.5	12.8	2.9
at Sixth „ (1924)	27.9	65.2	6.9	—
Paid staff				
at Fifth Congress (1922)	6.2	42.0	43.3	8.5
at Sixth „ (1924)	9.3	49.6	41.1	—

The increase in the proportion of Communists in the trade union executives stands out clearly in the above table. And it is also stated that the proportion of converts from other parties decreased by one-third.

DEPARTMENTAL INTER-TRADE UNION COUNCILS

The following figures show the party representation on the executive bodies of the councils in percentage :

	Communists	Independents	Other parties
At Fifth Congress	78.9	18.5	2.6
At Sixth Congress	91.9	8.1	—

The proportion of converts from other parties among the Communists which in 1922 was 31.3 per cent. decreased in 1924 to 25 per cent., and it should be noted that the majority of the presidents and secretaries were Communists affiliated to the party before October 1917.

¹ *Labour Messenger*, May-June-July 1924.

DISTRICT INTER-TRADE UNION OFFICES

83.5 per cent. of the members and 41.1 per cent. of the officials in these bodies were Communists, as were 85.8 per cent. of the delegates nominated by these offices in the smaller districts.

TRADE UNION SECTIONS

The proportion of Communists among the members and officials elected in the sections was respectively 64.6 and 45 per cent.

TRADE UNION SUBSECTIONS

The proportion of Communists varied from 15.7 in the Art Workers' Union to 76.16 per cent. in the Railwaymen's Union.

FACTORY COMMITTEES

Communists formed only a quarter of the members of the factory committees but it was they who as a rule controlled the committees. When one examines statistics concerning committee members exempted from work in accordance with Art. 159 of the Labour Code, it is seen that in private enterprises 70 per cent. were Communists, while in the State and co-operative undertakings the proportion of Communists was respectively 63.3 and 60 per cent.

These figures clearly prove that the management of trade union affairs rapidly passed into the hands of Communists, i.e. into the hands of their party, which henceforth governed the whole machinery of the trade union movement.

§ 2. — The Trade Unions and the State

NATIONALISATION OF THE UNIONS DURING THE COMMUNIST PERIOD

The Opposing Theses

Simultaneously with their efforts to impregnate the trade unions with their influence, the Communists from the very beginning of the October revolution did all in their power to make them a part of the Soviet State mechanism. Thus one of the first things which the Government of People's Commissaries did on getting into power was to call on the unions to participate in the economic and political organisation of the country. In November-December 1917 the unions were accordingly entrusted with the centralisation of workers' control and subsequently with the creation of the Supreme Economic Council, a body intended to manage the entire economic life of the country. Thus the unions were invested with actual official functions. As it turned out, however, they had not the men necessary for the

accomplishment of their new duties, and, even had they had them, the State would not have known how to make the best use of their services :

When it drew the trade unions into the revolutionary struggle and made use of them to get a hold over the workers, the Communist Party did not entertain any idea, even on the eve of the *coup d'Etat*, of giving them any definite functions during the transition period. . . . The Communist leaders could not decide on giving a precise rôle to the unions during the transition period, but put off the solution of the question till later. Nor did they draw up any plan for the carrying out of the new duties which the course of events was going to lay on the unions ¹.

It is abundantly clear that during the first months of the revolution the Communists did not know what use to make of the trade unions. The faulty organisation of the unions rendered them unfit to carry out any important part in the general scheme. As a matter of fact the unions were fully occupied in concentrating their forces to attack the private employers who, even at that moment, still had possession of most of the undertakings. The First Trade Union Congress held in January 1918 merely expressed a general idea of how the unions might participate in the economic organisation of the new regime. At this Congress there was no mention of such fundamental questions as those concerning wages, labour protection and social insurance, and it was only some time later that the importance of these questions became evident not only to the unions but to the Government itself. At the same time the Congress had considered the question of trade union collaboration in matters of State, and immediately after the addresses of welcome had been delivered the question of nationalisation of the unions began to be discussed. Long, and sometimes bitter, was the discussion that ensued on this subject. The Communists, and more especially the left wing revolutionary socialists, desired immediate nationalisation, as in their opinion " the unions were public and not private organisations, and their mission was to play a part in the organisation of the State " ².

The opposition was formed of Mensheviks and international socialists, and in their ranks were the former members of the Central Council of Trade Unions elected at the Conference of July 1917. Lozovsky, secretary of the Council, expressed himself on the subject as follows :

¹ GLEBOV : " The Nationalisation of the Trade Unions ", in *Vestnik Trooda*, 1921, No. 3.

² *Verbatim Report of the First Congress*, p. III.

Even in the present abnormal situation and in the absence of any precise plan or decisions, it seems to us that trade union independence from the Soviet organs of authority must be maintained; those who were elected at the Conference of July consider it their duty to protect this independence against all comers, even against the Soviet power itself¹.

Replying during the discussion to a speech by Zinoviev, Lozovsky showed the reasons which made him fear the nationalisation of the unions²:

The unions would suffer immense loss . . . ; if they become State organisations their decisions would be enforced by coercion and armed force, and no account would be taken of the collective opinion of the workers employed in the various branches of industry. In other words, we would replace the activity and collective organisation of the masses by the mechanical action of armed force. Moreover . . . it must be recognised that the working class, which is still very unenlightened, sees in the trade union a sort of commissariat, office, or administration, which decides and does all on its own initiative.

The right wing parties opposed still more vigorously the idea of nationalising the unions, and rose in indignation at the applause which had saluted the speech of Zinoviev when he promised Government aid to strikers:

"Is it possible", they asked, "that on account of a miserable sop offered to the working classes, you lose sight of all our highest ideals?"

Finally, however, the Congress compromised by adopting a resolution which met with the disapproval of the extreme left wing elements and made no mention of immediate nationalisation. This resolution ran as follows:

When, with the course of the revolution, the trade unions will have become sufficiently developed, they must be converted into organs of the socialist power, working in the hierarchy like other organisations to put in practice the new principles of organisation of economic life.

In order to transform the unions and unite all the economic organisations of the working class, and more especially the factory committees, it will be necessary, as a provisional measure, to establish close collaboration and liaison between the unions and the proletarian political organisations, and more especially with the councils of workers', soldiers and peasants' deputies.

The Congress is convinced that at the end of the present phase the unions will inevitably become organs of the socialist State, to which all persons engaged in actual production will of necessity adhere.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

² *Ibid.*, p. 97.

Thus the question of the nationalisation of the unions remained open until the Second Trade Union Congress, held in January 1919, when it led to a further compromise.

Speaking at the Second Conference, Lenin declared that the nationalisation of the trade unions was inevitable, but he admitted that the workers had not yet succeeded in getting out of the " mire of the former regime ", and were such slaves of custom that it was still impossible to proceed to the immediate transformation of the unions into State institutions.

During the discussion which followed Lenin's speech, there was a certain amount of opposition founded on the same arguments as at the First Congress. It was again pointed out that to nationalise the trade unions was tantamount to giving them power of coercion, that is to say, that coercion would be substituted for the people's voluntary union based on the rise of class consciousness ¹.

It was further stated that a transformation of the unions into State organisations would result in making them an object of hatred among the famished masses who blamed the Soviet administrative bodies for all their hardships ². Although the Communist Party had a crushing majority at the congress, the opposition was so clearly defined that it was again determined to come to a compromise and the following formula was adopted by the congress :

It is the duty of the trade unions to co-operate more and more actively with the Soviet authorities (direct participation in the work of all State organisations and the organisation of collective supervision over their activities ; performance of certain of the functions at present discharged by the Soviets), to aid in the setting up of various State institutions, and gradually to replace their own organisations by amalgamating the trade union institutions with those of the State.

But in view of the actual state of development of the trade union movement it would be a great mistake immediately to transform the unprepared unions into State organs, or to unite them to the latter, or to allow the unions to have arbitrary control over the State institutions ³.

¹ *Verbatim Report of the Second Conference*, p. 38. LOZOVSKY quotes examples and shows that the idea of nationalising the trade unions is not new, that the right wing social revolutionaries, notably Chernov, had supported it at the very beginning of the revolution, when a proposal had been made to entrust the management of the railways to the Railwaymen's Union. It was this idea which led to the creation of the *Vikjedor* (Central Executive Committee of Railwaymen), " this natural offspring of the love of Communists and social revolutionaries when they were first experimenting with the idea of nationalising the unions. The experience of the *Vikjedor* during the past year has demonstrated that nationalisation of the unions turns them into bureaucratic organisations ".

² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

Application of the Nationalisation Scheme

In practice, the unions already enjoyed all the privileges granted to public institutions. The Central Trade Union Council, which, under the Provisional Government, was asked to send representatives to all classes of State institutions, was entitled, after the October revolution, to send four members to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, this number being subsequently increased to 35. When workers' control was established by Decree of 14 November 1917, the Central Trade Union Council had five seats on the All-Russian Council of Workers' Control ¹.

Subsequently the participation of the unions in the various State institutions developed still further, and even as early as 1918 the unions were required to send representatives to certain of the commissariats and practically to assume complete control in the formation of the Supreme Economic Council and the Commissariat of Labour. On 28 October 1917 there had been formed and attached to the First Commissariat of Labour a labour committee which included six representatives of the central and inter-union organisations, the other members being assistant chiefs of section at the Commissariat ².

At the beginning of 1918 the question of uniting the Central Trade Union Council and the Labour Commissariat had already arisen. Nevertheless, the Commissariat of Labour continued to exist as a separate entity, although it was obliged to meet all the demands made by the Council. That this was so is clearly shown by the

¹ All these proposals never came to much, as the Central Trade Union Council was unable regularly to send representatives to the various State institutions, on account of the want of staff and the diversity of opinion among its members.

² The organisation of the Commissariat remained incomplete for a considerable time. At the First Congress of Local Labour Commissaries the Vice-Commissary of Labour, Nogine, declared that the working classes had a very vague idea of the work done by the Commissariat. Many thought that the duties of a commissary were synonymous with those of the trade unions, and it appears certain that at the beginning of 1918 the work of the unions and the local organs of the Labour Commissariat overlapped.

"The majority of the regional and local labour commissaries are chosen by the inter-union organisations. Even in the Commissariat of Labour trade unionists are in the majority. In these circumstances, the separate existence of the two institutions is bad for the revolution, as there is a certain amount of rivalry, and one or the other is bound to disappear." (*Messenger of the Commissariat of Labour*, 1918, No. 2, p. 27.)

statements made at the Second Congress of Trade Unions, held in January 1919, to the effect that :

The policy of the People's Commissariat of Labour would always coincide with the plan which the trade union movement had traced out for itself. In all questions concerning the classification of labour and wages, the Soviet authorities have always adhered to the opinions of the trade unions. And the future activities of the People's Commissariat of Labour will be based on the decisions taken at the Second Congress ¹.

These sentiments were further completed by the report of the Labour Commissary. It was the duty of the Commissariat, declared the Commissary, to enforce decisions taken by the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Union. And the Commissary adds in this connection :

Nor have we stopped there. The central administration has a very large amount of work to get through, and the staff recruited is not sufficient for the purpose. We have had to see that all sections of the Commissariat are largely composed of members of trade union institutions. The trade unions have, by their own efforts, set up special sections in the Commissariat of Labour to deal with the following matters : social insurance, labour protection, wages, and control of the labour market. Therefore, all measures which we have to enforce are communicated *in toto* to the unions ².

From the above it becomes clear that at the end of 1918 " the Commissariat of Labour was, in fact, in the hands of the trade unions " ³. But it is none the less certain that in the provinces the relations between the unions and the local organs of the Commissariat of Labour were practically non-existent. In this connection the Commissary of Labour declared at the Second Congress of Trade Unions that it was essential to bring to an end the disputes which, in the provinces, were dividing the trade union organisations and those of the Commissariat of Labour into two hostile camps. It was necessary that the local labour sections should be able, with the co-operation of the unions, to apply the Decrees issued by the central authorities. The Commissary also stated that in the Urals general chaos reigned, that in Petrograd the liaison between the two bodies existed only on paper, and that in Moscow

¹ N.....SKY, p. 10 (see " Sources ")

² N.....SKY, p. 47.

³ *The A.B.C. of Communism*, p. 357.

itself there was no contact whatever between the Inter-Trade Union Council of Moscow and the Labour Section of the Moscow Soviet ¹.

This was why the Second Congress, in its resolution relating to the activities of the Commissariat of Labour " ordered the local unions to co-operate in the work of the local labour section conformably with the methods laid down by the central authorities, viz. to appoint their representatives on the management bodies, and to set up services to deal with questions of wages, insurance, protection of labour, etc. " ²

Thus, from 1919 onwards the trade unions became complete masters of all matters pertaining to the organisation and protection of labour. And, as we shall see later on, their influence was equally powerful in the domain of economic organisation.

This state of affairs continued to develop throughout 1919, in spite of an appeal for moderation made by Lenin at the Second Congress of Trade Unions. As a matter of fact, this appeal was entirely lost in the confusion attending the civil war which was brewing at that time. In 1919, in order to hold the White Armies commanded by General Denekin which were advancing along the Black Sea coast towards Tula, the unions were transformed into mobilisation centres, and consequently, to some extent, overlapped the organs of the Commissariat of War.

The trade unions and factory committees had previously, during the October revolution, formed large contingents of Red Guards, and when hostilities were re-opened by the German troops and it was necessary to enrol volunteers in the Revolutionary Army, the trade unionists seem to have enlisted in large numbers. But these were, in all probability, mostly militant revolutionaries, who were convinced of the necessity of defending the revolution.

At the beginning of April 1919 the unions were asked by the Government to favour enlistment in the Red Army. During one of the sittings of the A.C.C.T.U., Lenin declared that the mobilisation of the 1889-1895 classes could only be carried out with the help of that body ³.

¹ One of the opposition speakers quoted even more striking examples of the conflict between the unionists and the Soviet authorities, but no details are given in N.....sky's abridged report of the Congress

² N.sky, p. 109.

³ *The A.B.C. of Communism*, p. 357.
mobilisation, and to do all in its power to encourage enlistment among the workers. Towards the end of April, the Council decided to call for

About this time the trade unions were entrusted by the Government with the provisioning of the workers and the working classes, and the unions thus took over a large number of the functions of the Commissariat of Supplies. In the meantime, they did not lose any part of their hold on the Commissariat of Labour. It was the unions who really drew up the wage tariffs, and the approval of the Commissariat was merely a matter of form. It was they again who drew up the legislation on labour protection, who had the monopoly of placing the workers in employment, and who managed the official system of insurance.

The unions also managed to acquire influence in the Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, which was set up in virtue of a Decree dated 7 February 1920 ¹.

Art. 6 of this Decree states that "all workers enjoying Soviet electoral rights may be members of the Inspection Service". At first the election of inspectors took place in the undertakings, but, later on, the Inspection Commissariat changed that method into one of nomination by the unions themselves ².

the voluntary enlistment of at least 10 per cent. of all trade unionists. But this appeal did not meet with the anticipated success. In certain districts recruiting was favourable, but it was still necessary to find methods to induce large numbers to join the colours. On 13 June the Government decreed the mobilisation of all workers and employees between 18 and 45 years of age. This mobilisation was to be carried out through the medium of committees composed of representatives of the militant authorities of the Supreme Economic Council and of the trade union institutions. A central committee was nominated by the A.C.C.T.U., and began to function on 15 June. It was almost immediately informed by the local committees that for many reasons it was impossible completely to follow the instructions issued. In spite of the efforts of the Central Committee, which sent instructors to the provincial committees, the mobilisation gave very small results, and it was finally cancelled on 13 September.

During the three months' mobilisation, the number of volunteers presenting themselves at the recruiting centres was 80,000, of whom 28,000 were found medically fit for active service and 12,000 for service in the lines of communication. Finally, 18,000 were absorbed in the Red Army and 10,000 in the commissariat services. (*Verbatim Report of the A.C.C.T.U.*, for 1910, pp. 102-109).

On the whole, the participation of the trade unions in the defence of the revolution was confined mainly to individual acts—very numerous, it is true—and did not take the form of a general movement, and it will be seen that instead of raising the enthusiasm of the working classes, the efforts of the unions to get their members to serve on the military and economic fronts resulted in further straining the none-too-solid bonds uniting the workers to the trade unions.

¹ *Collection of Laws*, 1920. No. 16.

² The duties of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection have been described as follows: The inspectorate must supervise the bringing

Thus, at the end of 1919, the trade unions were playing an important part in all branches of the economic and political life of the country. Nor did the change in the trade unions end here, as little by little, probably as the result of the transformation which was taking place, the trade unions began to act as if they were actually the Government. This fact was commented on at the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party in a resolution concerning the trade unions, which stated :

The trade unions must gradually transform themselves into auxiliary organs of the proletarian State, but it is not the converse which must take place.

Elsewhere the resolution stated further that the unions were " the base of the economic organisations which manage industry " but " that they are not an independent institution and it is not they alone that are to manage the national economy of the Soviet Republic ".

It is thus evident that even at that period, when it was thought that the civil war was over and that the moment had come to begin the economic reconstruction of the country, the Communist Party was endeavouring to limit the activities of the unions to a narrow domain. Nevertheless it is an undoubted fact that the unions were then State institutions and a fundamental part of the Soviet power. The only thing that was doubtful was the political part to be played by them, and this it was that gave rise to the great controversy on the unions which began at the end of 1920.

into operation and enforcement of the decisions taken by the Soviet authorities. It will supervise the work of the Soviet institutions and will audit the accounts and supervise the smooth running of the economic and financial organisations. It will oppose all bureaucratic tendencies and will make suggestions to the central authorities regarding reforms required in administrative methods in use. It will lodge complaints against all acts of maladministration, and will endeavour to train the workers to take part in the management of official matters.

The Inspection has been given wide powers of supervision and decision. In certain cases it may even suspend measures which are obviously bad ; it may prosecute in the Courts of Law. It has the right to supervise all State departments, and includes a number of departments dealing with (1) public supplies and agriculture, (2) industrial plant and machinery, (3) labour, social welfare, and public health, (4) public administration, (5) education and propaganda, (6) finance, (7) external relations, (8) army and naval affairs, (9) transport, (10) fuel and combustibles.

The Controversy on the Rôle of the Trade Unions

What initially gave rise to this discussion, which began at the Fifth All-Russian Inter-Trade Union Conference of October 1920, is not very clear. It will be seen later that one of the causes of the discontent reigning among the unions at that time was the attempt made to apply to the industrial trade unions the military methods employed by Trotsky towards the transport unions. In addition to this, the unions felt that they had not been allowed to play a sufficiently important part in the enforcement of the compulsory labour scheme which was introduced at the beginning of 1921. Again, they saw that the economic authorities, which had gone back to individual management in the undertakings, no longer paid so much attention to the proposals made by the unions concerning the nomination of administrators. The result of the advances made to the trade union movement was that the political leaders of the Communist Party found themselves opposed not by the unions but by a group of Communists who were expert in trade union matters and who, realising the value of their services to the central authorities, showed themselves inclined to manage the whole economic life of the country. And this fact did not at all suit the plans of the political leaders of the Communist Party.

Serious differences of opinion resulted in the party. The two most important factions were led respectively by Lenin and Trotsky.

While agreeing that the unions ought to be allowed to play an important part in the economic life of the country, Trotsky advocated the introduction of a policy of coercion towards the unions. Lenin, on the contrary, was for methods of persuasion, and advised the unions to leave to the technical experts all matters concerning economic organisation, and to devote themselves to their real duty, which was to become the "School of Communism". This clash of opinions finally resulted in the victory of Lenin's party both in Communist and trade union circles. This fact is noteworthy, as from a trade union point of view it indicated the beginning of the change over to the new economic policy, the effects of which were to be so far-reaching on the internal organisation of the trade unions.

A description of the Communist conception of trade union organisation has been given in the previous Chapter, and this conception may be said to have been completely applied towards the end of 1920 when about eight million workers were grouped together in a score of all-Russian unions; but it should be added that affiliation to the unions had been more or less compulsory in most cases.

These all-Russian unions were linked up by powerful inter-trade union organisations which did their best to take all initiative out of the hands of the trade union executives of the various branches of industry.

Besides exercising a very strict control over the activities of the unions, the inter-trade union organisations set up local secretariats in the districts where there were no unions and proceeded through these secretariats to organise the workers in the various industries. Thus it is seen that at that moment the Communist Party had managed to include all the workers in the unions, with the sole exception of the peasants, with whom it was impossible to get into touch, and the formerly wealthy classes whom the Soviets wished to subdue by the policy of vexatious pinpricks.

Thus, by a variety of methods the Communists had at the end of 1920 completely established their system of coercion and centralisation in trade union spheres as in all other domains.

§ 3. — The Trade Unions and the New Economic Policy

THE STEPS TOWARDS THE NEW POLICY

The cessation of hostilities which took place on all the Russian fronts during 1920 enabled the Bolshevik Government to take steps to put into operation the policy which they had announced at the beginning of the year and which included a return to peaceful labour and the economic reconstruction of the country.

A change in the policy of the Government was inevitable and this took place suddenly during the spring of 1921. Lenin convinced his party that the moment for risking all for all had passed and that it was essential to consolidate the conquests won by the proletarian revolution. It was, he said, the moment to call a halt and safeguard the interests of the proletarian workers who were submerged and outnumbered by the vast mass of Russian peasantry. In order to satisfy the peasants without in any way diminishing the power of the workers, Lenin proposed to replace the forced requisitions of agricultural products by a tax in kind, and to allow the peasants to dispose freely of their products after payment of this tax.

Such was the first phase of the new economic policy, a phase which was destined to change the whole economic system of the country, as once the peasant was entitled to dispose of his products

the re-establishment, more or less partial, of commerce, and those industries which manufactured articles wherewith to carry on commerce, was a logical consequence.

But at that period the output of nationalised industry was exceedingly limited. The huge Government machine was living entirely on stocks accumulated by the previous generation, and these stocks were being rapidly exhausted owing to the immense issues of paper money which were enabling the public to buy them up.

It then became apparent that national output had to be reorganised and developed, and this the authorities endeavoured to do by two methods. In the first place, they decided to stimulate private enterprise by leasing, where possible, the nationalised enterprises to private individuals, and by encouraging the arts and crafts. As a second measure it was decided to abandon the system of management in force in the nationalised enterprises and to run them on commercial lines. Henceforth, the undertakings were to regard output as their first consideration.

These new principles completely changed the position of the workers, whose interests were bound to be affected by commercial methods which forced the unions radically to change their whole plan of action.

Nor did the trade unions immediately grasp the situation. After the October revolution long months had been necessary for the Communist leaders before they were able to define the functions of the unions, and after the introduction of the NEP the same period of bewildered hesitation is to be observed. In this connection it is extremely interesting to follow the debates which took place at the Fourth Trade Union Congress, held in May 1921, when the fundamental principles of the NEP came up for discussion. It was then felt in a confused sort of manner that in view of the probable development of private industry, steps had to be taken to protect the workers' interests and improve their living conditions; but, as yet, there was no question of what the position of the unions would be in the nationalised undertakings. And yet the Fourth Congress had at its disposal a veritable mine of information in the resolutions adopted during the discussion of 1920, when the relative spheres of action of the economic organisations and the trade unions were defined with the utmost clearness.

The vague resolutions adopted at the Fourth Congress did not change in the slightest degree the decisions taken in 1920, which

henceforth remained unalterable. Another definite principle acquired about the same time, and which had important results on the expansion of the NEP, was the payment of wages in proportion with output. The Fourth Congress also approved a scheme of industrial subsidies, but at no time was any reference made to the participation of the trade unions in the government of the country. In this connection the Congress confined itself to pointing out that the control of the labour protection services had been transferred from the Commissariat of Labour to the trade unions, and that these bodies had legislative and executive powers in that domain. There was nothing in the resolutions of the Congress to show that these functions would, several months later, be given back to the Commissariat at the demand of the unions. As regards a wages policy, only occasional reference was made to collective agreements and that only as far as private undertakings were concerned. But in this matter the unions seem to have remained masters of the situation, notwithstanding the change of policy introduced.

It is not surprising, however, that all the consequences of the NEP did not come up for discussion at the Fourth Congress, as this Congress met only a few weeks after the introduction of the new policy, when the changes to be made in industrial policy were not at all clearly defined. Moreover, in spite of the assurances of Lenin and his more ardent supporters, many Communists still believed that the NEP was a still-born child.

THE CHANGE IN TRADE UNION POLICY

The more the NEP began to take definite shape the more the trade unions endeavoured to find their place in the new system. When the Decrees published in August 1921 announced the organisation of State trusts to be run on commercial lines, the trade unions demanded representation on the committees entrusted with the organisation of these new semi-independent economic institutions. The trade unions also took part in the reorganisation of commerce and in the consideration of the future position of the co-operative societies in the new scheme.

Slowly and surely, however, a difference of opinion between the Government departments and the trade unions made itself felt in these matters. The unions soon saw that their labour protection policy was meeting with bureaucratic opposition in the directorates

of the commercialised undertakings and trusts. In the conciliation of industrial disputes the unions were soon forced to leave the rôle of chief arbitrator to the Commissariat of Labour. And it was only towards the end of 1921 and as a result of long discussions that the situation became at all clear. On 28 December the Central Committee of the Communist Party entrusted three of its members (Lenin and two trade unionists — Rudzutak and Andreev) to draw up a memorandum on the functions and duties of the trade unions under the new conditions. The memorandum which was adopted by the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions was published on 13 January 1922 and defined in a general way the changes of policy which had to be realised in the trade union movement.

The terms of this memorandum were further developed and defined by the Second Plenary Assembly of the Central Council of Trade Unions which met in February 1922, and it may be said that this date marks the real introduction of the NEP as far as the trade unions are concerned. The resolutions adopted by the Assembly stated that the principles of trade union activity and organisation remained unchanged, but that their application had to coincide with the political and economic situation.

In principle, no change had been made in the fundamental Communist conception of trade unions and the aims of the movement remained the same. But whereas, during the Communist period which preceded the introduction of the NEP, the trade unions were nationalised and formed part of the State mechanism, from now on there was no further mention of these functions. The reasons for this are somewhat obscure. It is true that the working-class, which was still the power behind the Government, was not in a position to oppose the executive bodies of its own dictatorship. But State machinery being as yet very imperfect, the cases of a trade union being forced to resist abuses resulting from bad organisation could easily arise. And thus it was that it became necessary more clearly to define the position of the trade unions.

THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE TRADE UNIONS

The outstanding feature of the Soviet Government's social policy after the introduction of the NEP was the necessity which arose almost immediately to give the trade unions a definite legal

status. Up till then nothing had been done in this direction, although Art. 16 of the Constitution of 1918 of the R.S.F.S.R. declared that the State must help the workers to organise themselves:

In order to ensure freedom of association to the workers of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, the R.S.F.S.R., having destroyed the economic and political power of the wealthy classes and abolished the obstacles which in the bourgeois society prevented all unity and freedom of association among the working and peasant classes, intends to aid these latter by all means in its power to unite and organise themselves.

The unions had rapidly become State institutions and it had not appeared necessary to give them legal guarantees. But, faced by the NEP and the probability of the rebirth of private capital, it became essential to define the legal status of the workers' organisations.

For these reasons a chapter (XV) on the trade unions was inserted in the Labour Code of 1922.

The Code defines a trade union as " an association of citizens working for gain in undertakings, establishments, and enterprises, public or private. The union shall act for its members in all negotiations with the various State institutions and shall represent them at the conclusion of agreements and contracts and in all discussion of questions relating to labour and social welfare " (Art. 151 of the Code).

This text would seem to indicate that every association, having the aims mentioned above, would be recognised as a trade union and would enjoy the numerous privileges accorded to the unions. The Code goes this far and no further, and the question of determining whether this or that organisation was a trade union or not was left entirely to the jurisdiction of the trade union authorities.

The Code of 1922 lays it down as a general principle that trade unions are not required to register with the State institutions, that their organisation may be determined conformably with the principles laid down by a competent trade union congress, and that the unions must register with the inter-trade union organisations, which will group them according to the regulations drawn up by the All-Russian Congresses of Trade Unions (Art. 152 of the Code).

It is also stated in the Code that, in order to be entitled to the privileges accorded, a trade union must obey the regulations of the all-Russian trade union movement.

An association which is not duly registered with the inter-trade

union organisations may not call itself a trade union or claim the privileges accorded to the unions (Art. 153).

Thus, according to Soviet law, the original Communist unions are fully entitled to refuse affiliation to any workers' organisation which they may consider undesirable. Again, in all undertakings where a central committee of an all-Russian union finds itself opposed by a non-unionist workers' organisation, factory committees may be set up, and they alone are to benefit from the numerous privileges accorded to the trade unions.

Thus, organisations may be formed and registered only with the approval of the political authorities, who also control the right to hold meetings. According to a Decree dated 10 August 1925, applications for permission to hold local and all-Russian assemblies must be made one and two months in advance respectively.

The above facts show to a certain extent the privileged position of the unions.

Furthermore, the trade unions are corporate bodies and have the right to acquire and dispose of property and to conclude contracts, agreements, etc., in conformity with the legislation in force.

Art. 16 of the Constitution is embodied and extended in the Code which lays down that all State institutions must, in accordance with Art. 16 of the constitution of the R.S.F.S.R., do their utmost to help the producers' trade unions and their federations by providing premises for labour palaces and trade union headquarters, and by granting them special postal, telegraphic and telephonic rates and special privileges on the railways and inland navigation services, etc. (Art. 155).

Not only does the State favour the trade unions, but it also protects them by an article in the Penal Code (Art. 134).

All opposition to legitimate action by factory committees, trade unions or their delegates, or to the exercise of their privileges, is punishable by at least six months' imprisonment and a fine or confiscation of goods.

The legal sphere of activity of the trade unions is extremely wide. The Labour Code of 1922 goes into this subject in detail, but the following are the essential points :

In every undertaking there must be a trade union unit. This unit may be the factory committee, i.e. a committee composed of workers and employees or, in the absence of such committee, a delegate of the trade union with plenary powers (Art. 156). The

necessary liaison work between the trade unions and the undertakings is carried out by the factory committee, of which a certain number of delegates are exempted from work, in order that they may attend to committee work (Art. 159) ¹.

Without prejudice to the observance of the general regulations for the rescinding of the contract of work, members of the factory committees may only be dismissed with the consent of the trade union concerned (Art. 160).

The managements of undertakings, establishments and enterprises may not knowingly obstruct the work of the committees or of the bodies electing them (general assemblies or assemblies of delegates).

The upkeep of the factory committee is met by the employer, that is to say, that the committee is maintained by the administration, and its members are paid the ordinary rates of wages.

Those members who are exempted from work retain their full wages and grade and are given the guarantee that on the expiry of their tenure of office they will be re-employed in the same capacity in the same undertaking, establishment or enterprise on the basis of the collective agreement in force at the time of their election and the modifications which may have been made thereto in the interim (Art. 160).

The funds necessary for the maintenance of the factory committee are furnished by the undertaking, establishment or enterprise in accordance with the budget approved by the trade union in question, but the total of such funds may not exceed 2 per cent. of the total wages of the workers and employees in the given concern (Art. 162).

The management of an undertaking, establishment or enterprise is required to provide requisite premises for the factory committee, including heating, lighting and all requirements necessary for the work of the committee and for the holding of general assemblies or assemblies of delegates.

The committee must have free access to these premises in the execution of its duties (Art. 165).

Finally, the management is not entitled to demand a statement

¹ In undertakings, establishments and enterprises employing :

less than 300 persons :	1 exemption is allowed
from 300 to 1,000 „	2 exemptions are allowed
„ 1,000 to 5,000 „	3 „ „ „
over 5,000	5 „ „ „

of accounts concerning the moneys paid by it for the maintenance of the factory committee, this being a matter for the trade union organisations themselves.

The expenditure by the factory committee of the moneys mentioned in Art. 162 is governed by general regulations drawn up by the trade union concerned and these moneys may not be spent in any other manner (Art. 163).

The trade unions may request the management of an undertaking, establishment, or enterprise to make immediate payment of the money for the upkeep of the committee when such payment falls due, and they have the right to verify that such payment has been made (Art. 164).

What has been said is sufficient to show to what extent Soviet legislation favours the trade unions.

As a matter of fact, trade union liberty would be more complete in Russia than in any other country if the original Communist leaders did not limit it themselves by refusing to recognise all organisations whose policy does not exactly fit into the Communist theory of trade unionism.

DEFINITION AND RESTRICTION OF TRADE UNION ACTIVITY

It has been seen how the NEP forced the Communists to define the legal status of the workers' organisations ; but while having this effect it also led to a curtailment of the unions' sphere of activity and brought this back within the limits proposed by the Communist Party in 1920 and 1921.

Shortly after the introduction of the NEP, the main function of the unions was declared to be the protection of the workers' interests. Henceforth the unions were to take no further part in the management of industrial undertakings, this being left entirely to specially appointed officials. Nevertheless, the unions were not to be permitted to allow their attention to wane in matters of economic organisation. Entitled as they were to propose candidates for posts in the economic administration of the country ¹, it was considered a part of their duty to keep in contact with all new developments connected with the

¹ These functions were left to the unions in order to combat a new tendency which had appeared among the Communists, many of whom imagined that the policy of the Communist Party allowed the trade unions completely to disinterest themselves in economic matters.

national economy. Their work in this domain being distinctly separate from that of the economic institutions, their chief functions lay in the development of the system of collective agreements and the regulation, in conjunction with the employers (public or private), of conditions of labour and wages.

The Communists were prepared to recognise a strike resulting from a labour dispute in any branch of industry, but only in so far as this strike was controlled by a trade union, and the unions were ordered to do all in their power to avoid a suspension of work. This naturally led to the consideration of the part to be played by the unions in the institutions created for the settlement of industrial disputes. In this matter the unions had to cede many of their prerogatives and to content themselves with being a party in the joint conciliation bodies set up by law. They, like the employers, had to submit to official arbitration organised by the Commissariat of Labour.

And subsequently the legislative powers wielded by the unions in connection with labour protection were re-transferred to the Commissariat, with the result that the labour inspectorate chosen by the unions became a department of that institution.

As regards social insurance, the respective positions of the unions and the Commissariat of Labour was approximately the same. The unions were requested to organise the insurance funds, but the administration of the scheme was at first entrusted to the Commissariat of Insurance and subsequently to the Commissariat of Labour. •

The Government still openly proclaimed the unions as being the school of Communism, but in practice this formula was very restricted. The competence of the unions in educational matters was restricted mainly to the study of the utilisation of workers' spare time and the organisation of workers' clubs. In all matters concerning general education, and even technical instruction, they no longer acted in anything but a consultative capacity in the Commissariat of Education.

It is thus seen that the results of the introduction of the NEP on trade union participation in State affairs was very far-reaching. Even more fundamental perhaps was their influence on trade union organisation. In the first place they forced a return to the system of voluntary membership. At this period the Communists had come to the conclusion that it was useless to try to adhere strictly to the scheme of one big all-inclusive union. The workers had to be given

freedom to join or remain outside the unions. The unions were still to endeavour to convince the workers of the great benefits resulting from membership of a union, but no compulsion was to be used. Nevertheless, as voluntary membership of a union was admitted not only individually but also collectively, this left the way open to a certain amount of indirect compulsion.

The Communists further declared that the unions must no longer count on the financial support of the State. In future they were to depend solely on the contributions of their members and it was their duty to reduce their administrative expenses accordingly.

It should be added that the new trade union policy has undergone no essential modifications since its introduction. All that has been done has been to define it more clearly and apply the new ideas. Thus, when in 1925 and 1926 the question of trade union policy was again a subject of discussion at the 14th Congress and 15th Conference of the Communist Party, the latter contented itself by referring the speakers to the reforms decided on in 1922.

PART II

TRADE UNION ORGANISATION

CHAPTER I

INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE UNIONS DURING THE COMMUNIST PERIOD

§ 1. — The Factory Committees

Now that it has been seen how the Communists managed to impose their policy on the leaders of the trade union movement, it is interesting to consider the actual organisation of the unions themselves.

It will be remembered that during the period March-October 1917 two diverse tendencies existed in the trade union movement, the one, Communist, being in favour of the formation of factory committees, the other, Menshevik, which was the backbone of the trade union movement properly so called.

In March 1917 factory committees were set up for the first time, chiefly in the factories of Petrograd and Moscow¹. These committees, in addition to taking over the management of the undertakings, at once began to demand and obtain satisfaction for the workers' claims, especially as regards the eight-hour day.

The importance of this movement is shown by the fact that on 22 April 1917 the Ministry of Commerce promulgated a law on workers' committees (factory committees). By this measure the Government endeavoured to restrict the activity of the committees to within certain limits. The new Act provided for the formation of committees in public and private undertakings of all sorts; these committees could be set up at the request of one-tenth of the workers eligible to vote, or on the initiative of the management. Committee

¹ In the economic domain the working classes challenged the authority of the employers who up till then had held almost unlimited powers. The employers had to give way and the factory committees imposed limitations to their powers and created what might be called the "constitutional undertaking". (*Messenger of the Commissariat of Labour*, 1918, Nos. 2-3, p. 123.)

members could be dismissed only with the consent of the conciliation authorities.

The committees were entitled to convene workers' meetings and the management of the undertaking concerned was required to place premises at the committees' disposal. The employees of the undertaking could elect their own committee or take part in the election of the workers' committee ¹. But while the new law gave a definite legal status to factory committees, it did not at all succeed in restricting their activities. Instead of establishing friendly relations with the employers, the committees desired to issue orders, to manage the undertakings, and to exercise minute supervision over the acts of the management :

Convinced that the Provisional Government was incapable of establishing any form of law and order in the economic life of the country, the workers themselves finally took control of industry and forbade the undertakings to dispose of raw materials, fuel and machinery ².

The factory committees became more and more powerful, grouping behind them as they did a huge number of workers who, at that time, were probably unaware of the true character of the trade union movement.

The formation of the committees corresponded to a simple conception in the conflict with the employers. The workers were ever ready to follow the counsels of the committee, the members of whom they knew personally. But as yet, they followed their leaders blindly and with none of the labour discipline and class consciousness which are the real bases of the trade union movement.

Most of the committees only considered the individual interests of their own undertaking, and their main object was to keep their undertaking working irrespective of how the others were faring. They even went the length, in conjunction with the employers, of raising the price of the articles they manufactured. And they ended by disorganising the whole of the national economy as, in order to obtain raw materials and fuel for their personal requirements, they sent agents into the provinces, who often bought at ridiculously high prices ³.

¹ FIN : *Factory Committees in Russia*, pp. 39-42.

² TOMSKY, quoted by SENIUSHKIN : *Factory Committees in Russia and their Activity*, p. 9.

³ *Verbatim Report of the First Trade Union Congress*, speech by RIAZANOV, p. 237.

The trade unions, on the contrary, being less concerned with petty local and private interests, realised far more vividly than did the factory committees the necessity of improving economic conditions. And thus in many cases the factory committees drifted apart from the unions. The feeling of antagonism gradually developed, becoming particularly acute in Petrograd, where of the average factory committee of 15 members only 5 or 6 were affiliated to the corresponding trade union¹. After the October revolution, an anarchist spirit seemed to develop in the factory committees which, in accordance with anarchist ideas, began to look on the trade unions as "living corpses".

These tendencies were obviously not to the liking of the Bolsheviks, who were opposed to anarchist theories, but having made use of the factory committees to stir up the masses, to overthrow the Provisional Government and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, they found themselves, on getting into power, tied to these committees. They were forced to take into account this spontaneous form of workers' organisation which, in the majority of cases, did not at all coincide with their advanced ideas of centralisation. As a matter of fact, apart from their political tendencies, the form of organisation which the unions presented suited the policy of the Government, which finally came to the conclusion that it was necessary to amalgamate the two classes of organisations. As it was, one said: "All that remains for the factory committees to do is to commit suicide in the manner most advantageous for the trade union movement in general"².

This new plan was facilitated by the fact that the factory committees themselves felt the necessity of co-operative action. Having no desire to throw their lot in with the unions, they began by organising an All-Russian Central Association of Factory Committees, and, in spite of anarchist opposition, the First Trade Union Congress, held in January 1918, decided to amalgamate this association with the central trade union organisation.

From that moment the factory committee tended to become the basic organism of the trade unions. The mutual influence of the two movements was, however, apparent, as although they agreed to become part of the mechanism of the trade union movement, the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

² *Ibid.*, p. 235.

factory committees nevertheless forced this movement to adopt the principles of its elementary organisation, whence the announcement at the Second Congress of Tomsky's slogan "One undertaking, one union".

The logical consequence of this evolutionary movement was that a trade was no longer accepted as the basis of the constitution of a union, and in large ironworks, for example, where many various trades were represented, there was only one union grouping all the workers, from the puddler to the packer.

§ 2. — Trade Union Organisation by Industries

In their endeavours to reconcile the two forms of workers' organisations the Bolsheviks were led to ratify the decision of the Third Trade Union Conference, which contained provisions for the organisation of the trade unions by industries. Nevertheless, the new decisions arrived at were still very indefinite and it was only at the Second Congress that they were finally determined, as follows:

The industrial trade union is a single union and may be recognised by the following characteristics: (a) it groups all workers and employees in any given branch of industry, irrespective of the work they perform; (b) it has a central fund; (c) its business is managed according to principles of democratic centralisation; (d) a single central organ draws up the wage rates and conditions of labour for all the workers concerned; (e) the principles of formation are the same throughout the whole organisation; (f) the sections are subordinate technical organs; (g) the protection of the general interests of the organised workers and employees in any given branch of industry is in the hands of a single central body.

Even this definition risked leaving on one side all those workers who were not engaged in productive work properly so called. So the Second Congress inserted the following addendum:

As regards workers employed in branches of the national economy other than the industries of transformation, the principles of trade union organisation by industry should be applied so as to group them in unions of an economic or administrative character as the case may be. In carrying out this process all analogies in conditions of labour and work performed should be taken into account ¹.

Some little time later it was felt necessary to include technical and specialised workers in the trade union organisations. The

¹ N.....SKY : *The Second Congress*, p. 124.

Government was urgently in need of these workers who were quite lost sight of in the general mass of trade unionists and were consequently unable to voice their *desiderata*. It was decided to make a departure from the strict rules of organisation and to form special trade union sections open to technical workers. These sections were to have a very limited sphere of action *and were in no case to assume federal tendencies*. The sections were not to have the right to have their own funds or to appoint special members to carry on propaganda and trade union work in general, or to send representatives to other sections outside their own unions, or to set up trade union executive bodies (committees). In this manner the way was left open for the A.C.C.T.U. to refuse affiliation to unions not holding Communist opinions, and to prosecute associations of technical workers assuming a political character. Freedom of association was thus subordinated to affiliation to the Communist movement. As Tomsky said at the Second Congress :

We do not insist that these unions obey us blindly, but merely that they follow the general plan. When we ask them to work in the interests of the dictatorship of the proletariat and to promote proletarian discipline, it is not that we have any personal spite against the Mensheviks as such. But we must root out all those who, having recognised at the First Congress the necessity of collaborating with the Soviet Government, still persist in organising strikes against that Government. The unions which ferment strikes . . . must suffer for it ¹.

§ 3. — Trade Union Classification

Several years of experiment were necessary before it was found possible to establish a definite plan of classification of the various industries and branches of labour. In 1917 the grouping of the workers and unions was carried out without any method. At that period the Central Trade Union Council and the provincial inter-trade union executives had no precedent to guide them through the existing chaos, and this resulted in those unions which existed at the end of 1917 being finally dissolved or amalgamated with others ².

As has already been stated, the Second Trade Union Congress drew up a more definite trade union policy and, in 1919, proceeded to reorganise the whole movement. In certain cases this reorgani-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

² The *Verbatim Report of the A.C.C.T.U. for 1917* (pp. 91 and 96) gives a list of about 30 all-Russian trade unions, of which a certain number subsequently disappeared.

sation was a very delicate question and gave rise to considerable discussion ¹, and this in turn led to the introduction of certain simplifications in trade union machinery, but nevertheless the number of all-Russian unions increased from 30 to 32 during 1919. It is true that certain unions disappeared, but at the same time 6 new ones were formed.

In 1920, the A.C.C.T.U. once again decided to amalgamate certain unions and this led to long-drawn-out negotiations and controversy between the unions in question. Finally, however, in 1921, the number of all-Russian unions was reduced to 21, the Railway Transport Workers' and the Water Transport Workers' Unions amalgamating, as did those of the educational and art workers.

Proposals were also made to unite the printers with the paper workers' union, the food and drink workers with the sugar workers, and the Soviet employees with municipal employees. And there is no doubt that about this time there was a clearly defined tendency permeating trade union circles to set up a single all-Russian union of which the various existing unions would be mere sections.

§ 4. — The Formation of Trade Union Executives

From 1918 one of the aims of the Communists in connection with trade union organisation had been to give to the movement a central administration, which would correspond to the general plan of national, economic, and political organisation of the country. We have already given a survey of the general plan on which the vertical organisation of the unions by industries was built and liaison established between the trade union executives of the whole country by means of inter-trade union organisations modelled on the form of the A.C.C.T.U. The main features of this method of organisation were defined by the Second Congress in 1919 as follows:

¹ In the case of the union of workers in the petroleum districts which had affiliated to the Central Trade Union Council in 1918, the praesidium of the A.C.C.T.U. decided to dissolve it within two months as "the petroleum industry includes three classes of labour, viz., extraction, transformation, and transport of petrol. Therefore the workers must belong to the miners', chemists' or transport workers' union according to the duties which they perform". This decision, against which the union in question and the Principal Petroleum Committee (*Glavko-neft*) had lodged a protest with the Executive Committee of the A.C.C.T.U., was confirmed by this latter body (*Verbatim Report for 1919*, p. 17).

The type of formation which best corresponds to the fundamental duties of the trade union movement must embody all-Russian central unions with sections and subsections in the provinces (linked up by inter-trade union councils based on the formation of the All-Russian Council), and factory committees (or employees' committees in non-industrial undertakings). The territorial division into sections and subsections is to be determined by the central organ of the all-Russian trade unions concerned and every attention is to be given to the geographical distribution and numerical importance of the various industrial groups. At the same time the division into groups must correspond as far as possible with the administrative areas of the country ¹.

A clear idea of the constitution of the various trade union organisations can be had by turning to the model trade union statutes and regulations (*polozhenje*) for factory committees (and committees of employees) issued in 1918 and 1919, as therein are contained the general instructions and regulations for the formation of trade union organisations.

The foundation stone of the whole trade union structure is the factory committee. This body includes from two to eleven members elected for a period of six months by a general assembly of the workers in the given undertaking, and only trade unionists are eligible for election.

Next in order comes the subsection, corresponding generally to a district, and then the section which generally covers a whole province ². The duties of these various bodies are defined in the model statutes as follows: Factory committees (and employees' committees) in the one district or region are affiliated to the local, urban, or district subsection of the corresponding all-Russian union, the officials of the local subsection being elected by an assembly of delegates of the committees concerned.

With a view to co-ordinating their activities the local, urban, and district subsections are linked up by a departmental or regional section of the all-Russian union. The executive body of this section is elected by a conference of subsection representatives.

The provincial or regional sections are affiliated directly to the central committee of the all-Russian union. Like the urban and district subsections, they elect their own management and executive committee. At the top of this pyramid is the central committee of

¹ N. N. SKY: *The Second Congress*, p. 128.

² This division does not really correspond to facts and merely serves as a guiding principle in the scheme of organisation. Certain unions had subsections or sections corresponding to industrial regions distinct from the administrative divisions of the country.

the all-Russian union, which body is the executive organ of the all-Russian congress of the union in question. The organisation of the central committee is described as follows in the model statutes :

For the conduct of trade union affairs of an all-Russian character in the intervals between conferences, the all-Russian congress elects a central committee. Provided always that they are in no way contrary to the decisions of the A. C. C. T. U., the decisions of a central committee are obligatory not only for the sections and subsections but also for their members.

For the management of current affairs a plenary sitting of the Central Committee elects from among its members a bureau (or praesidium) which is composed of a president, a secretary, and several members.

Such was the vertical organisation of the trade union movement, at least in principle, for it will be seen that many departures were made from the original plan.

The horizontal organisation was, on the other hand, finally determined before the end of 1918, and the supreme inter-trade union executive body, the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, came into existence even as early as July 1917.

The A.C.C.T.U., which is elected by the All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions, the supreme authority in trade union matters in Russia, manages the whole trade union movement in the intervals between the sessions of the Congress.

In each province (*Gubernia*) there is an inter-trade union council elected by the provincial or departmental inter-trade union Congress, and in each district (*Uezd*) an inter-trade union office.

During 1920 in many localities where the population was too sparse to justify the formation of factory committees, inter-trade union secretariats were set up and all workers in the locality, irrespective of the industry in which they were employed, were affiliated to these bodies.

It is not without interest to cast a glance at the actual composition of the various institutions provided for under this scheme, and a short description of these is given below.

According to the *Statistical Year-Book for 1918-1920* the number of trade union organisations in Russia varied as follows :

	Number of trade union organisations
1917 : First half-year	349
Second half-year	564
1918 : First half-year	866
Second half-year	1,126

1919 : First half-year	2,118 (incomplete)
Second half-year	(No information)
1920 : First half-year	3,829 { (not including inter-trade union organs)
Second half-year	7,412

Although the Communists did their utmost to organise the unions in accordance with the administrative areas of the country, the distribution of trade union organisations in the various provinces was still very uneven at the end of 1920 ¹. Thus, while in Petrograd there were 23 trade union sections corresponding to the 23 all-Russian unions, the "German Commune" of the Volga district had only 11. The average number of unions in each province was 19 instead of 23 (1,307 departmental trade union sections for 69 departments or provinces).

In the districts the number of branch organisations of the all-Russian unions varied still more, and altogether only 6,005 subsections existed in 580 administrative districts, which means that the average number of subsections per district was 10 instead of 23.

At this time there was also an inter-trade union council in each departmental chief town and in almost all administrative districts. At the end of 1920 there were 557 inter-trade union offices for the 580 districts ¹.

The number of local branches varied largely according to the unions. During the first six months of 1920 the Sugar Workers' Union had 9, as compared with 380 possessed by the Union of Postal, Telegraphic and Telephonic Workers.

The unions having the greatest number of local branches were the following :

Postal, etc , workers	380
Soviet officials	306
Education	218
Leather workers	210
Public health	208

So it is seen that even in the administrations which had branch offices in the various districts and which employed a large staff there was not more than one union for every two districts.

¹ *The Labour Messenger*, 1921, Nos. 7-8.

The following table shows the growth in the number of local trade union branches of the various all-Russian unions during 1918-1920 :

Name of union	* Number of local branches at the beginning of		
	1918	1919	1920
Public health	42	118	208
Mines	7	8	52
Woodworkers	15	53	90
Agriculture	12	46	182
Fine arts	23	54	84
Metal-workers	68	186	177
Municipal services	10	45	135
Printers	38	161	182
Paper workers	3	5	33
Hotel employees	24	83	124
Food and drink workers	49	130	203
Education	7	52	218
Sugar workers	—	3	9
Postal, etc , workers	18	55	380
Soviet employees	111	261	306
Building trades	34	74	139
Textile workers	27	61	90
Chemical workers	11	76	86
Clothing workers	31	91	157
Transport : railway	—	—	93
„ water	—	—	69
„ local	32	75	79

It may therefore be said that at the end of 1920 there were about 8,000 trade union and inter-trade union organisations in existence, not including the factory committees. These organisations undoubtedly employed a large number of trade union officials, the more so as during the whole period of militant communism they were entrusted with a certain number of official duties of which mention will be made later.

In order to carry out their duties the trade unions had largely to increase their administrative staff, but statistics on this subject are available only from the beginning of 1921. Nevertheless, the figures which we reproduce below give some idea of the development of this bureaucracy.

According to Mr. Strumilin, chief of the Labour Statistics Office, there were 74 trade union officials for every 10,000 members in 1919, and 75 in 1920. A certain proportion of these officials were

unpaid and devoted only a part of their time to trade union matters. In the departmental chief towns the number of non-paid officials was 21 per 10,000 members, the number of paid officials being 37, while in the districts the corresponding figures were 68 and 33 ¹. In 1919 the A.C.C.T.U. included from 100 to 150 officials ², while the central committees of the various all-Russian unions employed about 940 officials, 537 of whom were paid.

An enquiry carried out in 1920 after the Third Trade Union Congress showed that there were 19,989 ³ trade union officials in the 62 departments covered by the enquiry. The following table shows the distribution of the majority of these officials:

In 62 departmental councils	270
In 259 district offices	1,454
In 1,030 departmental sections	8,003
In 2,184 district subsections	9,382
	<hr/>
	19,109

The rest of the officials were attached to organisations of a temporary character in the outlying districts (local secretariats).

If the statistics given by Mr. Strumilin are to be relied on and if it is recalled that the total membership of the unions in 1920 was about 8 million, it would appear that the number of trade union officials at that time was between 50,000 and 60,000. The exactitude of this estimate is moreover amply shown by the results of an enquiry carried out by the A.C.C.T.U. and summarised below ⁴.

From this enquiry it appears that, excluding statistics for factory committees, during the first six months of 1921, there were 27,100 officials (of whom 9,866 were paid) and 10,626 permanent collaborators in the trade union movement. As the enquiry only covered a membership of 4,250,000, the total number of trade union officials may be calculated at from 70,000 to 80,000. But as the report on the enquiry points out that the number of officials had increased by 75 per cent. since the beginning of 1921, this would indicate a total of approximately 50,000 for 1920.

Too much emphasis cannot be laid on the fact that the members of factory committees are not included in these estimates, as it is

¹ *Ibid.*, 1920, No. 2, p. 15.

² *Verbatim Report of the Central Trade Union Council for 1919*, p. 6.

³ *Report of the Central Trade Union Council for 1920*, p. 79. The report adds that this figure was undoubtedly a low estimate.

⁴ *Report of the Central Trade Union Council for 1921-1922*.

certain that it was these committees which did most of the real work in connection with the unions. It is impossible to give even an approximate estimate concerning the number of these officials, as in undertakings employing from 50 to 150 persons the committee included only two members, while in those employing 15,000 to 30,000 workers the number of members in a committee was sometimes as large as 25. It seems reasonable, however, to consider that the number of officials connected with factory committees was not far short of 50,000 during 1920¹.

Thus it is seen that during 1920 trade union officialdom included at least 100,000 persons². And yet complaints were received from all quarters regarding insufficiency of staff. It is, however, easy to explain this insufficiency, the chief reason for it being that many officials were called on to perform duties which prevented them from devoting any time to trade union matters. In this connection it is stated that of 404 officials appointed to the central committees of the all-Russian unions only 122 to 130 resided permanently in Moscow, 75 or 80 being attached to the *Glavki* or to the departments of the Supreme Economic Council, the others being in the provinces³. Moreover, in 1919-1920 a considerable number of these officials were mobilised or enlisted in the Red Army.

In addition to the executive organs described above a certain amount of attention must be given to the various congresses, conferences, and meetings which were convened to issue instructions to the permanent officials of the movement.

From 1918 to 1921 four All-Russian Trade Union Congresses were held (January 1918, January 1919, March 1920, May 1921), and during the same period two All-Russian Trade Union Conferences were convened by the A.C.C.T.U. The most important of these conferences, however, was the fifth, to which attention has already been drawn in the account of the Lenin-Trotsky discussion on the rôle of the trade unions. The various all-Russian unions held on an average one congress per annum, as did the inter-trade union federations of the various departments.

¹ According to the classification of undertakings in accordance with the number of workers employed (*Collection of Statistics*, 1918-1923, p. 103) the number of officials connected with factory committees may be estimated at 12,000 for industry alone.

² The transport unions alone had 60,000 trade union officials in 1920 (*Trood*, 7 June 1925).

³ *Labour Messenger*, 1920, No. 1, p. 112.

As far as the other trade union executives are concerned it is somewhat difficult to give any exact idea of their activities¹.

It would seem however, if one is to believe the statement made by Andreev to the Fourth Congress, that the meetings held were not sufficiently numerous and were badly attended. This naturally had a detrimental effect on the relationship between the unions and the mass of the workers, who remained in ignorance of the work done by the unions and were unable to give voice to their complaints.

Besides all these meetings, congresses and conferences, trade union propaganda was still carried on, although rather half-heartedly, by travelling trade union instructors². As a rule the visits were not sufficiently prolonged to allow the instructor to get properly acquainted with the local conditions. Far from being welcome, the visiting instructors were feared by the local instructors who were fully aware that their reports were almost sure to be unfavourable.

Thus towards the end of the Communist period the trade union movement had become a vast bureaucratic organisation with a compulsory membership of approximately 8 million. Its structure was based on the lines of the Soviet administration. As far as possible each central union had a branch in each province and even in each district. All these unions were linked up, at least theoretically, by departmental inter-trade union councils and district inter-trade union offices. Even in the small villages and hamlets trade union secretariats had been set up to group the local workers. And at the top of the whole system was the all-powerful All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions.

Each of these organisations included numerous departments employing large number of semi-State officials. In the absence of all action by the State institutions, the trade unions had extended

¹ During September 1920 there were held in the various branches of industry 15,311 meetings of trade union executives and 18,340 divers assemblies (*Report of the A.C.C.T.U.*, 1920-1921, p. 96).

The average number of meetings was 4.6 and the average attendance 68.2 per 1,000 trade union members during the first six months of 1920. (*Labour Messenger*, 1920, No. 2, p. 17).

² Even in 1920, when the activity of the instructors appears to have been at its height, trade union organs did not receive more than one or two visits a month. This liaison work varied largely according to the union. In September 1920 the total number of visits paid was 33,770, but whereas the wood workers' union received 5,594 only 144 were paid to the paper workers. In a large union like that of the textile workers only 635 visits were paid, while the metal workers received 684 visits.

their functions to include protection of labour, education, and the provisioning of the workers, and had set up administrative machinery to deal with these questions. The most outstanding feature of the trade union organisation was its inclusive centralisation, Yet notwithstanding the high degree of centralisation arrived at, the Third Trade Union Congress thought it necessary to go still further and to endeavour to set up " a single union " having a single council in the various departments and districts to which the existing unions would be mere affiliations.

In this mass of administrative machinery the individual trade unionist was lost to view; he was no longer in contact either with his factory committee or his union. The administrative activity of all these trade union and inter-trade union bodies was, however, more apparent than real, and for the most part the executives were suspended in the air between the central bodies and the masses, who knew nothing about them.

§ 5. — Trade Union Affiliation and Membership

During the Communist period compulsory membership was not definitely laid down by trade union regulations but, in practice, all workers had to belong to a union. Collective membership for a given undertaking depended entirely on a vote of the general assembly of the workers concerned. But as this vote was taken by show of hands in the presence of the members of the factory committee, there was almost always a majority for joining the union. Moreover, after the Third Congress it was decided " in order to simplify the work " to retain members' contributions from their wages and this " simplification " led to membership becoming a virtual obligation ¹. The unions no longer made any effort to consult the opinion of the masses, and workers' assemblies were no longer asked to vote for or against compulsory membership. Each new worker was automatically enrolled in the union and " accepted the retention of his contribution from his wages as an order from above, over which he had not the slightest control " ².

One of the principal duties assigned by the Communists to the unions was to group together the entire mass of the workers, and this purpose was relentlessly pursued during the years 1918 to 1920.

¹ TOMSKY : *The Principles of Trade Union Organisation*, p. 69.

² *Ibid.*

According to trade union statistics the number of trade unionists rose to eight million during 1921.

The rapid growth in membership is shown by the following figures ¹:

1917 : first six months	693,270
1918 : " " "	1,940,235
1919 : " " "	3,700,779
1920 : " " "	5,222,006
1920 : second six months	6,850,940
1921 : first six months	8,418,302

With all due reserve to the intrinsic value of the above figures ² it may be said that the years 1917 to 1921 were notable for a continued increase in trade union membership. From several dozen thousand in 1917 the membership grew till it surpassed 8 million in 1921. This growth was due to two causes, viz. the general development of trade unionism and a constant spread of the Soviet power over new territories.

It is worthy of note that, as soon as a new territory came under Bolshevik sway, the A.C.C.T.U. immediately sent delegates to organise on communist lines the trade union movement in those parts. This was so in the Ukraine in 1919-1920 and in White Russia in

¹ *Collection of Statistics of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, 1918-1923*, p. 246.

² It should be mentioned that it is extremely difficult to establish the exact number of trade unionists in Russia, especially for the first few months of the revolution. It would be useless to quote the various figures given by different writers on the subject and we will confine ourselves to drawing attention to several facts which in themselves are sufficient to show that all figures on the subject are more or less guess-work.

(1) In the first place, if membership is to be judged by the contributions paid, it is certain that the figures given are highly exaggerated. During 1917-1918 very few trade unionists paid their contributions to the unions and during 1919 the majority did not make direct payment as contributions were then being retained from wages. From then on, all workers were automatically affiliated to a union, if, as was usually the case, the general assembly of the workers in their undertaking had voted compulsory adhesion.

(2) Soviet statistics on the whole are greatly lacking in accuracy, and trade union statistics in particular are useful only to throw a general light on the situation. Everywhere great divergences are to be met. Thus the *Verbatim Report of the First Congress* gives the membership of the metal and textile workers' unions as 600,000 and 500,000 respectively, while another official publication gives it as 286,131 and 437,087.

(3) Up to the middle of 1921 it is obvious that, as a result of the civil war, large portions of the trade union movement were constantly losing touch with the central organs. When for example the Donetz Basin was occupied, false statistics were issued over a long period.

1919¹. A good idea of the increase in trade union membership is to be made by consulting the detailed table published in the *Statistical Year Book for 1919-1920*, and which is given in abridged form below :

Region or department	End of 1917	Beginning of 1919	End of 1920
Central industrial district	158,682	495,184	583,697
Moscow	410,823	636,357	686,209
Productive region	75,621	341,031	802,703
North-west	6,471	47,887	333,634
Petrograd	500,000	465,538	327,711
West	15,012	62,549	321,447
Volga	204,986	491,588	880,536
North	66,557	91,669	802,218
Siberia	1,680	14,645	461,683
South-east	45,440	89,644	415,803
Ukraine	168,288	353,126	1,124,583
Turkestan	—	—	165,483

The above table shows that from 1919 to 1920 practically no extension of the trade union movement took place in the central districts, especially in the departments of Moscow and Petrograd.

In the last-named district there was even a large decrease in membership. This was the time of mobilisation, the exodus to the country, and the industrial debacle. The movement, however, developed considerably during this time in the outlying provinces, especially in those where the civil war lasted longest.

The growth of trade unionism in the various branches of the economic life of the country is shown in the following table :

¹ In certain cases during the advance of the Red Armies towards Vilna and Warsaw, the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions sent instructors' corps into districts which did not actually form part of Soviet Russia.

TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP FROM 1917 TO 1921 ¹

Industrial branches	1917	1918	1919	1920	1920	1921
				First six months	Second six months	First six months
Agriculture	577	2,462	18,557	140,095	260,018	658,954
Forestry	—	1,968	15,037	2	2	2
Paper	1,391	15,094	28,003	21,988	27,158	26,853
Mining	—	32,252	67,252	234,590	303,418	321,698
Wood	5,364	21,443	45,356	98,793	183,411	246,955
Leather	4,947	55,869	77,282	159,838	235,025	278,800
Metal	110,627	286,131	553,097	526,172	561,644	587,850
Printing	34,308	43,928	75,221	56,298	81,644	93,871
Food and drink	13,871	59,197	97,959	184,571	281,874	352,997
Sugar	—	—	1,020	28,979	69,345	50,838
Glass	1,704	10,644	13,979	55,443	35,924	3
Building	7,788	68,140	73,939	158,921	299,524	355,629
Tobacco	3,412	17,395	26,731	30,814	37,183	38,478 ¹
Textiles	69,796	437,087	553,487	382,222	373,751	428,190
Chemical products	9,367	48,279	74,248	126,907	158,973	182,933
Clothing	19,147	54,228	76,638	104,188	159,469	176,381
Water transport ⁵	—	—	199,940	187,887	245,070	286,835
Railway transport ⁵	—	—	500,000	1,200,087	1,032,087	1,127,479
Local transport	2,889	58,743	81,532	68,512	127,521	203,138
Postal services	138	11,437	58,596	123,402	189,854	197,074
Fine arts ⁶	680	5,188	27,580	40,339	106,405	137,770
Education ⁶	—	2,207	27,283	204,739	433,646	651,257
Pharmaceutical trades	571	5,000	12,550	16,488	7	7
Public health	715	38,517	97,799	233,813	482,396	587,934
Banking	1,550	7,748	27,284	8	8	8
Finance	—	1,581	10,721	8	8	8
Government control	—	—	—	63,914	8	8
State services	10,873	114,539	529,841	554,079	882,489	1,067,357
Municipal services	4,500	88,313	82,606	89,642	179,393	223,877
Domestic service	1,465	64,229	113,188	45,078	9	9
Barbers	357	6,175	7,380	8,471	9	9
Firemen	—	46	1,621	13,037	9	9
Hotels	172	33,571	58,906	62,699	109,718	135,298
Various	387,069	354,824	72,140	—	—	—
Total	693,278	1,946,235	3,706,779	5,222,006	6,856,940	8,418,362

¹ Collection of Statistics for the U.S.S.R., p. 246

² Amalgamated with Agricultural Workers' Union.

³ Amalgamated with Chemical Workers' Union.

⁴ Amalgamated with Food and Drink Workers' Union

⁵ Water transport and railway transport formed one union during 1920-1922 (*Tsekhtrane*).

⁶ Fine art and educational workers formed one union during 1921-1922

⁷ Amalgamated with Public Health Workers' Union.

⁸ Amalgamated with State Services Workers' Union.

⁹ Amalgamated with Municipal Workers' Union.

The following conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing table:

(1) Membership in certain unions changed very little after 1919: such is the case for the metal workers, printers, paper workers, and textile workers. For the last-named union there is even a decrease which must be attributed to the ruin of the textile industry.

(2) A certain number of unions were formed at a later period, e.g. agricultural workers, public health workers, educational and art workers, sugar workers, inland water transport workers, railwaymen, etc. The miners also organised their unions tardily, as the greater part of the mining districts remained for a long period in the hands of the anti-Soviet forces.

(3) Certain unions showed great development in 1920-1921, for example, the leather workers, wood workers, food and drink workers, building workers, and rolling stock and cartage workers. This was partly due to the fact that about that time the unions in question began to accept as members workers employed in home industries (*kustari*). This is the real explanation of the fact that the wood workers increased from 45,000 in 1919 to 250,000 in 1921.

(4) A few other unions, like those of the Soviet employees and railwaymen, had their numbers swelled by fictitious and temporary membership. This was especially the case in those unions which were hard hit by the unemployment crisis of 1922. As regards the union of Soviet employees, it is an undoubted fact that many intellectual workers and persons belonging to the formerly wealthy classes joined in order to benefit from the privileges granted to trade unionists. The trade union leaders themselves recognised that the figure of 8,000,000 members did not at all correspond to reality. On the one hand this figure included a great number of persons who could not be classified as wage earners, and on the other hand the majority of the members had never expressed their desire to join a union.

In conclusion it may be said that what was really wanting in order that these trade unionists could be regarded as conscientious supporters of the union was the voluntary payment of their contribution, and this fact stands out clearly when one studies the financial policy of the unions from 1918 to 1921.

§ 6. — Financial Organisation

The proposal to have a central trade union fund was originally made at the First Trade Union Congress and was subsequently approved by the Second Congress, which proceeded to take measures to bring the scheme into operation. The executives of the local unions (factory committees or employees' committees) were requested to transfer all contributions received to the corresponding local trade union subsections, and these bodies had, in turn, to forward these moneys to the departmental sections, after deduction of the sum earmarked in the budget for their administrative expenses. Of the total sums received from the subsections the sections transmitted 30 per cent. to their central committee and 10 per cent. to the departmental inter-trade union council. The remaining 60 per cent. was retained by the sections and was considered as an advance on their budgetary estimates. Finally, the central committees were requested to pay 10 per cent. of all moneys received by them to the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions.

In virtue of certain resolutions adopted by the Second Trade Union Congress, the entire revenue from contributions belongs to the central committee of the unions, the sums left at the disposal of the subordinate trade union bodies being considered as short term loans.

Another resolution adopted by the Second Trade Union Congress defines the single trade union fund as follows :

In view of the character of the Russian trade union movement, all special funds such as strike funds, reserve funds, etc., controlled by the local organisations, must be wound up and transferred to a fund common to the whole trade union movement. The A.C.C.T.U. will also form a special relief fund for foreign organisations, which fund will be supported by gifts and special credits.

In the early days of the revolution there was no fixed rate for contributions. In some unions contributions were a certain proportion of the wages earned, but in others no definite rule was made. In 1919, however, it was considered "that in view of the constant depreciation of the rouble it was best to adopt a percentage of wages system" and this was fixed at 1 per cent., being later increased to 2 per cent.

Attention has already been drawn to the manner in which contributions were paid and therein we have one of the characteristics of the Russian trade union movement. Up to 1919 there was

an entire absence of any legislation permitting the deduction of contributions from the workers' wages, but in 1920 a resolution adopted by the Third Congress stated:

With the permission of the local trade union authorities the management of an undertaking or institution may deduct trade union contributions from the workers' wages. All sums thus collected are to be sent by the management to the trade union organisation concerned, accompanied by a nominal roll showing the amount deducted from each person mentioned.

This method of financial organisation turned out to be of great service to the Communist theory of trade unionism. In the first place it led to the introduction of compulsory membership of the unions and secondly, by giving complete financial control to the central organ of the movement, it placed it in a strong position in relation to the local organisations. This power was further increased by a resolution adopted by the Second Trade Union Congress according to which "the trade unions may receive special grants from the State departments to cover work of general utility (education, protection of labour, etc.)". Such were the financial links which bound the Russian trade union movement together. At the same time it is extremely important to note that the primary organs of the movement—the factory committees—were not included in the scheme, and that their administrative expenditure was borne entirely by the undertakings concerned.

At the same time while this scheme, which was intended to provide ample financial resources for the trade union movement, was being built up, a certain number of measures were adopted to meet urgent requirements.

Attention has been drawn elsewhere to the statement by Zinoviev to the First Trade Union Congress to the effect that the Government was prepared to give financial support to the unions. This policy was practised extensively during 1918 when the A.C.C.T.U., which had received only 280,000 roubles in contributions, received a grant of 1,680,000 roubles from the Government authorities and the Communist Party. Henceforth the outstanding features of the financial situation of the trade union movement were shortage of funds and a consequent dependence, especially among the higher organs, on State grants.

In 1919 the situation cannot be said to have undergone any great change, especially when the depreciation of the currency is remembered. According to the financial report of the A.C.C.T.U.

to the Third Trade Union Congress, the contributions paid during the year amounted to 4,000,000 roubles, while expenditure exceeded 6,000,000 roubles. The moneys advanced by the Government for certain specific purposes were in many cases used to finance other schemes, this being especially so in the case of funds advanced for the relief of the occupied areas. Again, the proportion of the contributions due to the Central Council was paid with great irregularity. "Only two unions made their payments promptly." Many others paid contributions without furnishing any details concerning their membership.

The position of the departmental inter-trade union bodies was no better, and in 1919 the A.C.C.T.U. had to subsidise them to the amount of $1\frac{1}{2}$ million roubles.

If the situation of the unions themselves was a little more satisfactory, it will nevertheless be seen from the following table that the contributions paid in 1919 were not always in proportion to membership :

Unions	Membership	Total contributions paid
Metal workers	544,547	7,701,126 roubles
Textile workers	550,623	7,296,750 „
Inland water transport	200,000	6,000,000 „
Public health	98,037	2,500,000 „
Clothing workers	76,851	1,070,090 „
Leather workers	77,792	886,373 „
Printing workers	75,988	402,070 „

During 1919 a number of central committees received subsidies from various State institutions as shown in the following table :

Unions	Contributions paid	Subsidies received
Textile workers	7,296,750	2,437,771 roubles
Inland water transport	6,000,000	3,000,000 „
Leather workers	886,374	320,402 „
Printing workers	402,070	109,206 „

Trade union finance went from bad to worse during the following year. No separate figures are available for the various unions, but the balance sheet of the A.C.C.T.U. submitted to the Fourth Congress contained the following items :

Revenue

	Roubles
Contributions	16,725,295
Subsidies from the Commissariat of Labour	205,000,000

Expenditure

Subsidies to the central committees and inter-trade union organs	69,841,629
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Thus it is seen that in 1920, in spite of all the measures described above, the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions could no longer depend entirely on the contributions by the unions. On the contrary, the Central Committee was obliged to finance the unions in order to enable them to accomplish the many new and difficult tasks they had undertaken. Thus the unions had become to a very large extent financially dependent on the State. They continued to exact contributions from their members without these latter being entirely aware of the fact, as all contributions had taken the form of a simple deduction of wages. But the sum received in contributions, which was very variable on account of the changeability of wage rates, represented only a very small item in the budget of the unions. Briefly, it may be said that, in order to keep the immense bureaucratic machine working and to allow the unions to perform their duties, it had become necessary to resort to State subsidies on a very large scale.

CHAPTER II

THE REVISION OF TRADE UNION POLICY

§ 1. — The Results of the Communist Regime

Before proceeding further with our present study it is perhaps as well to give a brief summary of the internal situation of the trade union movement as it was at the end of the Communist period.

The unions had succeeded in grouping together about eight million members, the majority of whom had been enrolled by the arbitrary action of the factory committees. A large part of these were workers employed in guilds or in homework who had very little in common with the ordinary wage earners.

Again, the majority did not, properly speaking, actually pay their contributions, as these were simply stopped out of their wages by the accountancy branch of the undertaking in which they were employed.

Around this mass of trade unionists had been set up an immense bureaucracy, including roughly one hundred thousand officials distributed over several tens of thousands of executive bodies.

The entire trade union and inter-trade union management was highly centralised, but a great want of liaison was noticeable between the different branches of the structure. Andreev pointed out to the Fourth Trade Union Congress ¹ that if this liaison were not properly established, it would be impossible to carry out methodical and fruitful work. The instructors sent into the districts by the trade union executives conducted themselves in a highly aggressive manner and their visits were of short duration, infrequent and extremely irregular. This could hardly be otherwise as the militant workers were thrown in whole battalions on to every front, economic as well as military, where any weakness was felt. When it was necessary to

¹ *Verbatim Report of the Fourth Congress*, pp. 173 et seq

organise a special week's effort to stimulate any given branch of industry or national economy, the quickest way was to recruit a special corps of workers from among the trade unionists and send it immediately to the threatened spot.

Again, the liaison between the trade unionists and their executives was very slack. To quote Andreev ¹:

Up to now the trade union organs have been very much out of touch with the great mass of the workers because we have never done enough to tighten up the connecting links . . . the organisations in closest contact with the people must meet more frequently and carry out assiduous propaganda among the workers.

And indeed, as we have seen, the militant Communists once detached from their organisations soon lost contact with the people. It was these very persons who were chosen from among the great mass of trade unionists to advise on questions concerning the workers and the economic life of the country. "Gradually the term 'union' had begun to mean not the mass of organised workers but the leaders of the movement." ².

Again, the fact that the entire trade union bureaucracy was completely dependent on the State—the members' contributions covering only a mere fraction of the general administrative expenses of the unions—widened the gulf between the trade union executives and the members of the unions.

This fact was realised by the Communists themselves and attention has already been drawn to the various controversies which took place on this subject during 1919 and afterwards. The most acute trade union crisis, however, arose in 1920.

Trotsky's party considered that the trade union movement had arrived at a critical period which was characterised, they said, by an absence of contact with the working masses, incessant disputes between the unions and economic organisations, and a complete want of decision on the part of the unions as regards the accomplishment of their various duties. According to Trotsky and his followers, the unions were doing nothing and were good for nothing. "They remain on one side", said Trotsky, "and confine themselves to being a school of Communism." From this to the desire to abolish the unions altogether there was only one step. Trotsky was of opinion

¹ *Verbatim Report of the Fourth Congress*, pp. 173 et seq.

² *Labour Messenger*, 1922, No. 2, p. 13.

that the best way to abolish the unions was by "progressive amalgamation with the economic organisations". In this way, he thought, the Communists, who were expert in economic matters, but ignorant of the organisation of the masses, would receive the help of those who were well-informed on this subject.

Another group, called the workers' opposition, held a diametrically opposed opinion, being convinced that, if trade union matters were going badly, it was because the unions had not enough freedom of action. They claimed that the unions ought to have complete control of the national economy, or failing this, that all economic matters should be regulated by a "congress of producers".

Still others, recognising the immensity of the duties imposed by the Third Congress on the unions, proposed to reduce these and retain only those which were of vital importance to the workers and the national economy, as, for example, the constitution of wage funds, the provision of clothing to the workers, and the enforcement of the regulations on labour.

Others again went still further and were for setting up a sort of aristocracy among the unions themselves. Their idea was that of the twenty-three existing unions only the more important should be given duties in connection with the questions mentioned above. Such a plan, however, could naturally only foster jealousy among the various unions and their leaders. But as a matter of fact, in advocating this plan the trade unionists responsible were merely following the example of the Soviet authorities who had grouped the factories in "shock" and "super-shock" categories, having special regulations designed to retain the staff necessary for the working of the establishments engaged in war-work.

In spite of the favour which these new ideas found in certain quarters, it was generally feared that any discrimination in the importance of the work allotted to the various unions would risk leading to further dissension among the unions, and nothing was actually done. Nevertheless, all these discussions go to show that at the end of 1920 a certain amount of confusion reigned as regards the basis of organisation of the trade union movement.

While one faction thought that the unions should be absorbed by the economic organisations, the other considered it was the economic organisations which should be subordinated to the unions. Nor did any solution of the problem seem possible. But as Zinoviev pointed out to the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party held in

March 1921, not only was trade unionism going through a critical period, but the whole revolution was also affected by the same phenomenon, and the moment was therefore most inopportune to change from one system to another. As a matter of fact, it can be safely asserted that the difficulties of this transitory period were the result of a sort of demobilisation which was carried out at the termination of the civil war, without any plan or method. Up till then the trade unions had been sustained by an enthusiasm which was continually being renewed by the course of events at home and abroad:

Constantly faced with the civil war, which exacted enormous sacrifices from them, the trade unions, while carrying out the military duties which fell to their lot, were also engaged with problems of internal organisation. These questions required great and sustained efforts on the part of the trade union officials, and in these conditions there could be little question of method and continuity of policy. Thus, as long as the work of organising and providing units for the various Soviet departments went on, questions of policy were temporarily lost to view. But once the great question of organisation was dealt with and the civil war terminated, the unions were given an established, if not a very definite status, and the inevitable period of crisis then arose¹.

It was, moreover, obvious to all that the trade union organisation had to be changed to a great extent, especially after the fundamental economic and social changes introduced by the NEP. The Fourth Congress which met in May 1921 shortly after the adoption of the NEP admitted—rather timidly albeit—the necessity of decentralisation, “as the development of co-operation in small-scale industry and the simplification of organisations and measures of national economy give a local character to a large portion of national activity”².

Thus, from the Fourth Congress onwards the general policy of internal organisation was based on the idea of getting into closer touch with the masses. But at this period the trade union leaders had little or no faith in the longevity of the NEP and they allowed other plans, contradictory vestiges of the Communist period, to exist side by side with the new plan. Still imbued with ideas of centralisation, they could not suddenly renounce the captivating idea suggested by “one big union”. So they compromised by saying that the realisation of this idea was not to be forced, but that the inter-trade union organisations should take steps gradually to centralise certain functions.

¹ *Labour Messenger*, 1922, No. 2, p. 3.

² *Verbatim Report of the Fourth Congress*, p. 237.

This, of course, was a flagrant contradiction which even the trade unions were forced to recognise. As Tomsky said:

It is manifest that this policy does not tend to develop local initiative. Its effect will be rather to transform the local organisations into executive bodies of the central powers . . . these contradictions arise from the ambiguity in the position of the unions themselves¹

Although the Fourth Congress did not proceed further with this discussion, the whole question of reorganisation was under consideration throughout 1921. It was only in 1922 after the second plenary assembly of the Trade Union Council in the month of February that the really fundamental reforms were undertaken.

§ 2. — The Reforms

RECRUITMENT OF TRADE UNIONISTS

The first reform to be considered by the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions concerned the recruitment of members. In February 1922 the necessity of re-introducing voluntary membership was officially recognised. A certain restriction was, however, attached to this decision, viz. that collective membership could be adopted by an absolute vote of a general assembly of the workers of a given enterprise

Then again in September 1922, the Fifth Congress declared that, in order to promote closer contact with the masses, trade union contributions should in future be paid individually.

At the same time, the A.C.C.T.U. advised the unions to show more discrimination in recruiting members. For although under the Communist system all workers were liable to be enrolled *nolens volens* in the unions, this was no longer the case after the introduction of the NEP

During 1920 and 1921 certain unions, basing themselves on the resolutions adopted at the Third Trade Union Congress, had accepted homeworkers (*Kustari*) as members on the ground that these workers were working for the State. Although membership of these unions had consequently largely increased, the Communists considered that this amalgamation of the lower-middle-class workers and the real proletariat was having a detrimental influence on the unions.

¹ TOMSKY : *The Principles of Trade Union Organisation*, pp. 61-62.

This opinion was adopted generally without any opposition, and it was decided in 1923 to revert to the decisions of the Second Congress which had refused to allow the *Kustani* to join the unions

About this period there was also a general tendency in the unions to exclude seasonal workers from membership. The majority of these workers were of peasant origin, and the Fourth Congress decided that the admission to membership of these semi-proletarian elements would be a real danger to the unions.

Gradually, however, a change took place in these ideas and, without going into details, it may be pointed out that the Sixth Trade Union Congress empowered the unions to admit seasonal workers to membership, and to keep in touch with them even after the expiry of their seasonal engagement. The reason underlying this decision is not difficult to discover, and is simply a consequence of the desire of the Communists to extend their influence among the poorer peasants. From this decision, however, it may once again be seen what the Communists really expected from the unions, which had come to be considered more and more as the "school of Communism". As Tomsky recently said: "the trade unions are a transmitting post between the party and the mass of the workers who still remain in complete political ignorance. They are the instrument by which the proletariat spreads its influence among the peasant class." ¹

This admission to trade union membership of persons who were at the same time semi-proletarian urban workers and smallholders in the country would seem to show that the unions are endeavouring to find new members.

Indeed, the only people ineligible for membership are those who cannot be considered as wage earners properly so called. They include the following: artisans, members of artisans' co-operative associations, proprietors or lessees of undertakings (including manufacturers and concessionaires) and their managers, the administrative staff of private, leased and conceded undertakings which have the right to engage workers, and commercial middlemen ².

There is no question of excluding from membership the administrative staff of nationalised undertakings, nor that of economic

¹ *Trood*, 30 May 1925.

² *FIN*, *op. cit.*

organisations and State trusts ¹. Even in undertakings formed by the State in co-operation with private capital, only the directors are excluded from trade union membership, the reason being that they are considered to be the representatives of private capital. Latterly the same tendency has appeared under another form. The Sixth Congress had recommended the exercise of the greatest prudence in exclusion from membership of the unions. Subsequently Melnichansky drew the attention of the trade unions to the fact that exclusions were being made on trifling grounds. As he pointed out: "Every exclusion is equivalent to civil and political death for a worker" ². He insisted that every case should be thoroughly examined before a decision was taken. In no circumstance should a person be excluded simply on the decision of a committee appointed to combat "violation of professional ethics", and all cases should be submitted for a decision to a general assembly of the workers in the undertakings concerned. According to Mr. Fine, the only reason that should justify total exclusion is the loss of civil rights as the result of a criminal offence, and in no case should condemnation for a petty misdemeanour be considered sufficient ground for exclusion ³.

All these facts go to show that from the Sixth Congress onwards the higher trade union authorities made an endeavour to effect a radical change in the policy practised by the unions as regards exclusion from membership. Several typical cases were quoted at the same Congress by Tomskey, who stated that some unions had excluded workers who had refused to accept office in the unions, or had come to work in a state of intoxication, or had absented themselves from work on a religious holiday. Even after the Sixth Congress there were cases of workers being excluded from the unions because they worked in a trade other than their own, or had not taken sufficient

¹ This point is no negligible one, as later we shall be led to consider the possible influence of this policy on the attitude of the factory committees towards the managements of the undertakings. It is, however, easy to see the bad effect produced abroad by this policy. According to *Trood* (7 October 1925) the whole question was being considered by the Central Trade Union Council, which now seems to have come to a definite decision on the matter. Not only do "red directors" belong to the union connected with their undertaking, but they are also required to join the corresponding engineering trade union section, even if they are not engineers. This latter decision was taken by the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions in spite of protests raised by the Central Office of Engineers (*Trood*, 11 November 1926).

² *Trood*, 30 May 1925.

³ *Labour Messenger*, April 1925, p. 39.

care of their union membership card, etc. Again, in certain cases some unions seem to have been seized with a mania to make wholesale exclusion.

But it is an undoubted fact that at the present moment the leaders of the trade union movement are doing their utmost to put an end to these abuses which "raise legitimate indignation and discontent among the workers" ¹.

It is now considered that exclusion should be confined to members who betray the working classes or act in a manner unworthy of a trade unionist. In such categories are placed strike-breakers (in cases where the strike is authorised by the union), workers joining forces with the employers to the detriment of their fellow workers, and trade union officials guilty of prevarication. It should be added that the latter class has recently increased in dangerous proportions.

CHANGES IN TRADE UNION STRUCTURE

The second reform introduced in trade union organisation deals with the structure and administration of the unions.

The resolution adopted by the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions states that as circumstances have completely changed, methods must be modified accordingly.

Up till now the fundamental activity of the unions has gravitated towards economic organisation, the whole movement tending to amalgamate with the State institutions. Therefore it was absolutely logical and essential to set up unions corresponding to the economic organisations and covering the various branches of industry depending on the given economic organisation. As the unions were carrying out numerous official duties, they naturally figured on the State budget; hence the necessity to centralise trade union funds, the consequent complete subordination of the trade union organisations, and the tendency to transform the all-Russian trade union organisations into sections of the inter-trade union bodies.

Rational as this plan of organisation was in the past, it no longer corresponds with the difficult tasks now before the unions. In order that the unions may be in a position to carry out their duties, it is essential for them to understand the opinions and conditions of labour of the masses they unite.

The conclusion arrived at is that complete freedom of action must be left to all trade union bodies from the highest to the lowest, and that management by the higher organs, which consisted in

¹ FIN, *op. cit.*

regulating by circulars every detail of organisation for the lower organs, must be abolished. But in recognising the necessity of granting greater liberty of action to the executives of the unions, the A.C.C.T.U. pointed out that all instructions of a general character had to be strictly observed. "All feelings of sentiment will be put aside in dealing with refractory organisations."

The resolution of the A.C.C.T.U. condemns the idea that the departmental trade union organs should be simply sections of the departmental inter-trade union councils, and insists on a complete reorganisation of the whole system of inter-trade union district offices with a view to cutting down expenditure.

The Fifth Congress, held in September 1922, confined itself to elaborating these different points. It confirmed the principle of wider autonomy for the all-Russian unions, which were authorised to reorganise their system of local organisations according to the peculiarities of the corresponding economic branch, provided that this reorganisation resulted in a decrease in the number of organisations and officials employed

FINANCIAL REORGANISATION

The third and perhaps the most important reform undertaken deals with the financial management of the trade union organisations. Up till 1922 as we have seen, the revenue from members' contributions covered only a small fraction of trade union expenditure. The unions, entrusted with numerous official duties, had got into the habit of depending entirely on Government subsidies. When the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions decided to relieve the unions of the greater part of their onerous official duties in order that they might give more attention to the workers' interests, it was also determined that the unions must in future rely for revenue only on members' contributions. The effect of this sweeping decision was somewhat softened by the A.C.C.T.U. reserving the right to receive certain subsidies to finance organisations falling into debt.

As regards the decentralisation of trade union funds, the new measures were not so complete. Contributions continued to be collected by the factory committees which transferred them to the corresponding section of their union. It has previously been pointed out that until 1921 these sections were allowed to retain only 50 per cent. of these funds as loans. After 1922, however, a larger part was retained by the sections, which were authorised to send only

10 per cent. to the Departmental Inter-Trade Union Council, and from 5 to 25 per cent. to the Central Committee of their union.

The upkeep of the factory committees continued to be borne by the undertakings concerned. The details of this burden on industry had previously, as has been seen, been carefully regulated by the Labour Code, which stipulated that in no case was expenditure under this heading to exceed 2 per cent. of the wages bill of the undertaking concerned.

During the Communist period the workers had never had the vaguest notion of their financial obligations towards the unions. The undertakings had always effected the payment of the 2 per cent. of the wages, but from 1922, having to work on a commercial basis, they began to put off the payment of trade union contributions as long as possible. The result was that the trade unions were obliged to take measures to obtain the money due to them. It was immediately recognised that the surest means of obtaining these payments regularly was to revert to the system of individual payment. But it was only at the session held in May 1923 that the Central Trade Union Council definitely recommended a return to this method ¹.

Another important reform was made in trade union financial organisation by the decision of the Fifth Congress to authorise the reconstitution of the various special funds corresponding to the special duties of the unions. Thus the decision of the Second Congress of 1919, which had suppressed these funds, was reversed, and it again became permissible for the unions to have their own special strike funds, education funds, mutual-aid funds and provisional unemployment funds.

To sum up, it may be said that the new features introduced during 1922 in trade union internal organisation included voluntary membership, decentralisation, administrative reorganisation, financial independence, and individual payment of contributions.

¹ Where the system of individual payment of contributions is in force, it is generally considered necessary to have one collector for very 20 or 30 members. This collector makes one round a month. Besides the trade union contributions properly so called, he also collects other contributions (clubs, mutual-aid societies, various associations) and gives a temporary receipt to the payer, whose account book he takes and transfers to the factory committee concerned. The factory committee subsequently issues official receipts for the payments made.

In many organisations, however, these arrangements work badly. In certain cases, in order to simplify the work of the collectors, proposals and experiments have been made in paying contributions by means of stamps specially issued for the purpose.

Notwithstanding everything that the Russian trade union leaders may say, certain of these reforms would have amounted to more than a change of tactics had they been properly applied. It is sure that the return to voluntary membership would have freed trade unionism from all Government control, while it would have led the trade unions completely to renounce Government subsidies. The trade unions would undoubtedly have become what they had ceased to be, i.e. the workers' organs of defence against employers, public or private.

But, in reality, the trade union leaders were unable deliberately to renounce the habits acquired during the period of Communism.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS OF TRADE UNION POLICY DURING THE NEP

§ 1. — Trade Union Membership

The restriction of the trade unions' field of activity and the partial return to voluntary membership had a disastrous effect on the numerical strength of the unions during the early stages of the NEP. Again, membership was further adversely affected by other factors, such as the restriction of official services (public administrations, transport, etc.) and the winding up of numerous undertakings, which took place during 1921-1922. On the other hand, certain factors favoured an increase of membership, among such being the general demobilisation which began in 1920, the migration of the peasants from the famine-stricken areas in 1921, the boom in industry in 1922, the growth of the excess population in the country, the fear of unemployment felt by non-trade unionists, trade union propaganda among the local native-born population of the various federated republics, etc. Without going into further details, the immediate effect of these various factors on trade union membership in Russia may be seen from the following figures concerning the total membership of the movement :

TOTAL NUMBER OF TRADE UNIONISTS IN THE U.S.S.R.

July 1921	8,428,362
October 1922	4,483,095
October 1923	5,551,000
July 1924	6,036,000
April 1926	8,768,200
July 1926	9,278,000

After decreasing by almost 50 per cent. during 1921 and 1922, trade union membership began to increase rapidly in 1923. For many and various reasons this increase was not evenly distributed

over the various unions. Certain branches of national production, finding immediate markets for their goods, developed more quickly than others, which found it more difficult to dispose of their wares. It is very probable also that the central committees of the various unions did not all show the same amount of activity and initiative.

The following table shows for each union the maximum membership (which was generally reached towards the middle of 1921), the minimum figure, and the total membership on 1 April 1926:

Branches of industry	Maximum membership		Minimum membership		Membership on 1 April 1926
Agriculture	July 1921	659,000	January 1923	254,000	922,300
Mining	July 1921	322,000	October 1922	228,000	387,100
Wood	July 1921	247,000	October 1922	82,000	158,600
Leather	July 1921	279,000	October 1922	77,000	119,100
Metallurgy	April 1921	600,000	October 1922	422,000	782,200
Printing	July 1921	94,000	April 1922	61,000	110,500
Food and drink	July 1921	391,000	July 1922	178,000	423,200
Paper	October 1921	27,000	July 1922	19,000	41,100
Sugar	October 1921	51,000	October 1922	31,000	101,000
Building	July 1921	356,000	October 1922	102,000	536,000
Textiles	July 1921	428,000	April 1922	359,000	773,100
Chemical products	July 1921	183,000	October 1922	124,000	225,400
Clothing	April 1921	179,000	January 1923	49,000	68,400
Water transport	October 1921	299,000	January 1923	120,000	154,600
Railway transport	July 1921	1,127,000	October 1922	715,000	977,100
Local transport	July 1921	203,000	October 1922	102,000	173,200
Postal and telephone services	October 1921	198,000	January 1924	99,000	112,000
Fine arts	July 1921	138,000	October 1922	58,000	81,300
Education	October 1921	756,000	January 1923	382,000	686,900
Public health	July 1921	588,000	January 1923	283,000	442,700
Soviet administration and commerce	July 1921	1,067,000	October 1922	473,000	1,069,300
Municipal administra- tion	July 1921	224,000	July 1921	124,000	228,100
Hotels and restaurants	July 1921	135,000	October 1922	38,000	195,000
			Total :		8,768,200

The first unions to check the fall in membership, which was general towards the end of 1921 and at the beginning of 1922, were the textile and printers' unions in April 1922. Thereafter, it was the turn of the unions of food and drink workers, sugar workers and municipal workers in July of the same year. In a majority of the

unions the lowest membership figures were reached in October 1922. Nevertheless, in certain unions with a large membership (agriculture, public health, education, inland water transport, clothing), the difficult period extended into 1923. In certain unions the decrease in membership reached very large proportions, e.g. :

	Per cent.
Leather workers	72
Building workers	74
Clothing workers	73
Agriculture	61

A large fall in membership is also to be noticed in the intellectual workers' organisations, and the decrease averaged 53 per cent. among the fine art, educational, public health, and Soviet employees' unions.

The smallest decrease in membership (16 per cent.) was returned by the Textile Workers' Union, which, as has already been pointed out, was practically the only union showing a loss in numerical strength during the period 1918-1921.

Once the critical period was over, the membership of many of the unions began to increase rapidly again. Thus, the Union of Agricultural Workers increased from 250,000 to 922,000 members, but this was chiefly the result of the affiliation of the *Batraki*, (poorer peasant classes) whose numbers have been multiplied during the last few years, owing to the increase in excess population and the poverty which reigns in certain parts of Russia.

Among industrial workers, membership, when it once began to increase, did so very rapidly. In the textile, paper, and food and drink trades, membership has more than doubled since the lowest figure was reached, while the sugar workers have increased threefold and that of the building workers fivefold. These increases correspond in large measure to a boom in the various branches of industry. The housing crisis and the necessity for greatly increased constructional work has naturally led to increased demands for builders, who, incidentally, are among the better-paid Russian workers. The increased production of sugar and industrial crops has led to a boom in the corresponding industries, which have been able to engage numbers of new hands. Other industrial unions showing a notable increase in membership include those of the mining industry (70 per cent.), wood workers (90 per cent.) and metal workers (80 per cent.).

In the transport workers' unions the average increase has been

much less, and has not exceeded 30 per cent. In the railwaymen's unions this was due to the great reduction of staff which was made in 1923. The highest increase took place in the unions of local transport workers (rolling-stock and cartage workers), where membership increased by 70 per cent.

Among the intellectual workers the greatest increase was shown by the Soviet Employees' Union (216 per cent.). This was due almost entirely to the increase in the number of official commercial departments, and to the affiliation of large numbers of employees engaged in private commercial undertakings. The union next in order is that of the teachers (80 per cent.), this being the result of the intensive trade union propaganda carried out among teachers in the provinces.

It cannot be said that the work of building up trade union membership presented any special peculiarities for the various districts of the Republic, unless it be mentioned that in outlying republics, such as the Far Eastern Republic of Kirghisia, trade union propaganda was extremely active in 1924 ¹.

The rapid increase in trade union membership from the beginning of 1923 is further corroborated by the following table of statistics relating to the growth of trade unionism among the workers :

¹ Propaganda work has been carefully arranged to curry favour with the ethnical minorities. In districts where there are many native workers, all trade union work is done simultaneously in the native and Russian languages, and the leaders of the movement are chosen, as far as possible, from among the local population. But the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions carefully watches that these privileges do not lead to the setting up of a nationalist movement, as this would be in direct contradiction with the principles of the Communist trade union theory, which forbids any subdivision of the movement on account of nationality, religion or politics. In such regions the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions maintains branch offices ; of such character are the offices of Kirghisia, Turkestan, South-eastern Caucasia, and the Ukraine.

PERCENTAGE OF TRADE UNIONISTS AMONG THE WORKERS

Branches of industry	1 July 1924	1 January 1924	1 July 1924	1 April 1926
Agriculture	90.9	86.6	74.0	69.1
Paper	93.9	92.9	91.4	92.2
Mining	88.5	86.4	86.4	87.0
Wood	78.8	83.5	79.7	85.2
Leather	95.0	94.1	93.1	91.7
Metallurgy	90.2	93.3	90.7	91.7
Printing	98.9	98.0	97.5	96.4
Food and drink	95.3	94.0	92.3	87.0
Sugar	39.1	51.9	50.9	92.5
Building	92.2	92.8	87.8	85.5
Textiles	97.4	97.6	96.7	95.6
Chemical products	94.6	93.8	91.8	91.6
Clothing	97.8	95.4	91.6	91.5
Water transport	93.6	96.7	94.3	92.8
Railway transport	95.5	95.2	94.3	94.6
Local transport	97.1	96.7	97.1	92.9
Postal and telephone services	98.7	98.2	97.1	96.0
Fine arts	95.7	94.8	94.3	93.7
Public health	96.5	96.4	95.4	95.9
Education	91.4	90.6	90.2	87.4
Soviet administration	85.2	87.6	86.9	83.2
Municipal administration	94.8	95.1	92.6	93.9
Hotels and restaurants	96.3	91.1	91.1	90.6
Average	91.2	92.0	89.6	¹

¹ The general average is not given by the *Labour Statistics* (1926, Nos. 7 and 8), which puts in a special category all trades employing large numbers of seasonal workers (agriculture, sugar, building, inland water transport). If the average is taken for these four branches of industry, the percentage of trade unionists among the workers' is 90.4 per cent.

The only union showing any constant tendency to decrease is that of the agricultural workers, but it should be mentioned that this union had only begun at that time to include the *Batraki* ¹.

¹ Since the summer of 1924 the Communists have made great efforts to reach the proletariat and even the semi-proletariat classes in the rural districts. The number of *Batraki* having increased simultaneously with the economic and political development of the richer peasants, the Communist Party seized this opportunity to strengthen the links between the urban and rural proletarian workers. This task was left to the unions already existing, and naturally, the greater part of the work fell on the Union of Agricultural and Forestry Workers, although all the unions which had important groups of members in the rural districts (Soviet employees, postal workers, teachers, etc.) took part in this work.

What is clearly shown by the above table is that, on an average, about 90 per cent. of the workers were members of the unions. In order, however, to judge the real value of these statistics, it is essential to know how far affiliation was voluntary, and to determine to what extent compulsion was applied in the payment of contributions. There is no doubt that in the early days NEP voluntary membership was somewhat compromised by the fact that an assembly of workers could decide on compulsory membership for all the workers in any given undertaking. Again, the workers who did not dare to withdraw from the unions for fear of reprisals were not in a position to refuse payment of contributions, as these were automatically deducted from their wages. Furthermore, the fact that it was extremely difficult to find work without being a member of a union exercised a sort of indirect pressure on the workers in favour of the unions, especially during periods of acute unemployment.

§ 2. — Payment of Contributions

The re-introduction of individual payment of contributions, which was bound to have considerable influence on financial organisation and the policy of the recruiting of the unions, was not decided on without a considerable amount of discussion. Many prominent Communists were formally opposed to this proposal, as they considered that any relaxation in proletarian discipline would be fatal to the Communist theory of trade unionism. It would therefore seem very likely that it was in the spirit of compromise that the Fifth Congress included the following passage in its resolution on the subject :

Uniting, as they do, the best elements of the working classes, the trade unions cannot confine themselves to defending the interests of their members only. The real aim of the Russian trade unions has always been to protect the interests of the workers on the whole. While, as a rule, no distinction is made between trade unionists and non-unionists, the unions must insist that the collective agreements give preferential rights of employment to trade unionists. The unions must also draft and present for the approval of the authorities a number of provisions giving preference to trade unionists in the matter of admission to educational courses and schools, and the issue of free tickets to theatres, etc. ¹

As Tomskey pointed out ², this was at first sight a flat contradiction of the idea of equality of treatment for trade unionists and non-

¹ *Verbatim Report*, Fifth Congress, 1916.

² TOMSKY, *op. cit.* p. 87.

members of the unions. But, he went on to say, if the unions were to be responsible for the observance of collective agreements, there had to be a certain number of conscientious trade unionists in the undertaking concerned. In fact, there had to be a majority of such workers. Therefore, it was essential to make the workers realise the value of affiliation to the unions.

This policy has been carefully carried out. According to the terms of Art. 10 of the model collective agreement issued in March 1924 by the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, all managements must pledge themselves to give preference to trade unionists when engaging workers. The same article also states that on the closure of an undertaking, or on the reduction of staff, non-union workers will be the first to be dismissed.

Such were the precautionary measures taken by the Communists on the re-introduction of voluntary membership. At the same time, it must be admitted that since 1922 the idea of voluntary membership, badly applied as it has been, has nevertheless made considerable progress. Doubtless, reasons of finance and internal trade union policy are largely responsible for this, but the fact remains that the principle of voluntary membership is no longer challenged. And it is not without interest to see how this result has been arrived at.

According to enquiries carried out in 1923¹ the average contribution (in "real"² roubles) per member was as follows during June-December 1922 :

1922	Contribution due	Contribution actually paid
June	0.20	0.7
July	0.20	0.11
August	0.20	0.12
September	0.20	0.13
October	0.22	0.17
November	0.20	0.16
December	0.23	0.22

The payment of contributions in December 1922 appears to have been satisfactory, but this was due to the fact that at that date the State undertakings had paid part of the arrears of wages. In any case, it is certain that it was still more customary to collect contri-

¹ *Bulletin of the A.C.C.T.U.*, 1923, No. 1 ; *Trood*, 14 April 1923.

² The real rouble is a fictitious monetary unit, representing the purchasing power of the pre-war rouble calculated according to the index numbers of prices.

butions by deduction from wages than to allow the workers to pay them personally to the trade union collectors.

During 1923, when irregularity in the payment of contributions showed no signs of abating, the Petrograd trade union authorities tried the experiment of re-establishing the system of individual payment. It would appear that although this method required greater efforts on the part of the unions, it gave more satisfactory results. Nevertheless, this system was not generally adopted without long drawn-out discussion in trade union circles. In some quarters it was feared that if members were free to pay or not, they might leave the unions, while in others it was asserted that the former system, when it was well applied, resulted in less loss of time and gave better results than the system of individual payment.

At a session held in April 1923, the A.C.C.T.U. nevertheless warmly advocated a return to the system of individual payment, but the re-introduction of this policy took place very slowly. By the end of 1923 only 50 per cent. of the trade unionists were paying their contributions personally. There was, however, more than one reason for this. In the first place, there was the repugnance already alluded to among certain factions against allowing the workers too much liberty. Again, at this period, the irregularity with which wages were paid, combined with the sudden fall in the purchasing power of the rouble, resulted in the worker receiving on pay day only a mere fraction of the money due to him, and this did not encourage him to pay his contribution. Thirdly, the collectors were not at all efficient as yet in their delicate task ¹.

At the end of 1924, when the Sixth Trade Union Congress was held, a considerable amount of progress had already been made, although the strict application of the new system was still a thing of the future. According to the report submitted to the Congress, about 80 to 85 per cent. of the trade unionists were paying their contributions personally, while for the remaining 15 to 20 per cent., contributions were still an automatic deduction from wages. In its resolution on trade union financial organisation, the Congress ordered a complete abandonment of this latter system, stating that, in future, all contributions were to be paid personally by the individuals concerned. But even after this, certain abuses arose, and the *Labour*

¹ So much so, that it was necessary to stimulate their ardour by giving them a certain percentage of the contributions collected. This procedure was, however, formally condemned by the Sixth Congress.

Messenger drew attention to certain arrangements for the collection of contributions, which contradict all idea of volition on the part of the workers. In the Tula Small Arms Works, for example, the collector was seated by the side of the accountant paying wages. The deduction from wages was made in his presence and under his supervision. Again, in other undertakings the workers were required to give a written permission authorising this deduction. In some cases, also, the management of the undertaking furnished the trade union inspector with an official list of the workers employed, showing the contributions due from each worker mentioned

Be this as it may, there seems little doubt that the adoption of the system of individual payment has had a good effect on the payment of contributions. In any case, towards the end of 1924 there is no trace in official documents of complaints on this subject. Contributions are, however, often paid in arrear, and it is estimated that in the better organised unions these arrears amount to about 8 to 12 per cent., and to 30 to 60 per cent. in the other unions ¹.

During 1924 to 1925 the payment of contributions again became very irregular. It was quite common in some unions to find two-thirds of the members neglecting to pay at all. About 20 per cent. of the members of the Ijevsk Metal Workers' Union did not pay their contributions, and in certain unions of the Donetz Basin there are about 60 per cent. of non-paying members. Even in Leningrad 30 per cent. of the textile workers paid nothing towards their unions ².

One of the main causes of these irregularities is that the workers blame the trade union bureaucracy for making them pay out a considerable part of their wages in contributions to organisations which very often had nothing in common with the idea of trade unionism. During the last year or two there have been formed in Russia a large number of so-called free associations. Among these are the M.O.P.R. (International Workers' Relief), the O.D.V.F. (Association in Favour of the Aerial Fleet), Dobrokhim (Society for the Promotion of the Chemical Industry) ; the workers are absolutely forced to pay contributions towards these societies, and these payments are a heavy drain on their earnings. In addition to the 2 per cent. of wages payable as trade union contributions, the workers are also required to pay special contributions towards the upkeep of mutual

¹ *Trood*, 18 October 1924.

² *Labour Messenger*, 1924, No. 4, p. 23.

aid funds, unemployment funds, clubs, etc., although the character of these institutions is wholly trade unionist. In certain cases the trade unionist sees from 5 to 10 per cent. of his wages retained by the undertaking employing him for the payment of these contributions.

The protests which had been raised on this subject found an echo at the Sixth Trade Union Congress, which decided that the total amount of contributions payable must not exceed 4 per cent. of the wages earned. The Congress further stated that the unions must allow the workers to decide whether they wanted to join or remain outside these so-called free associations.

§ 3. — Financial Management

During 1920 the expenditure of the vast majority of the trade union executives exceeded their income to a very considerable extent. A long period was necessary before the unions became accustomed to do without State subsidies, and it is not without interest to see how the various executives adapted themselves to the new order of ideas.

TRADE UNION SECTIONS

The return to a stable financial policy was effected more rapidly in the trade union sections than elsewhere. As a general rule it may be said that in these sections, great improvement in the financial situation set in from 1922 onwards, and in 1923-1924 income exceeded expenditure.

This is illustrated by the following table, which shows the proportion of expenses in relation to income :

	Per cent.
Fourth quarter, 1922	91.0
First quarter, 1923	75.6
Third quarter, 1923	78.3

These figures would tend to show that the general situation was excellent, but it must be remembered in this connection that they are only average figures, and that more than half of the sections were in debt during 1923-1924.

The sections in financial difficulties were helped by the central committees granting advances from the excess receipts of

other sections. Thus, during the first quarter of 1924 the excess receipts of the central committees were 560,018 roubles, of which 175,333 roubles were advanced to defaulting sections ¹.

Another form of aid extended to sections in difficulties consisted in allowing them to dispense with paying their dues (15.8 per cent.) or to pay these with irregularity (41.1 per cent).

This practice would seem in contradiction with the fact that the general account for the sections is periodically closed, while on the other hand, as will be seen later, the central committees are supposed to keep a credit balance on hand. But, in fact, this contradiction does not arise, as it is only the smaller sections, grouping a relatively low number of members, which show a deficit.

TRADE UNION CENTRAL COMMITTEES

During 1922-1923 more than half of the central committees were greatly in arrear, and at the end of 1923 five of them were still showing a debit balance. Nevertheless, the majority of the committees have managed to stabilise their position since 1923, although for a long period their situation was desperate in several cases. In five months the expenditure of the central committee of the P.T.T. workers amounted to 7.4 times more than the incoming receipts, while during the same period the agricultural workers' committee spent 5.4 times and the leather workers' committee 4.2 times their income.

The situation improved greatly, however, during the early months of 1924, and the general budget of the central committees showed the following figures for a period of six months :

	Roubles
Receipts -	2,699,918
Expenditure	2,139,300
Credit balance	560,618 (20.8 per cent. of the total receipts)

Mainly as a result of the stabilisation of the currency, receipts increased rapidly from the month of January onwards, increasing from 226,367 to 623,839 roubles. Until then the higher organs, which were receiving their share of the contributions with great irregularity, suffered heavy losses on account of the depreciation of

¹ *Labour Messenger*, January 1925, p. 161.

the rouble. It would seem, however, that although the majority of the central committees managed to stabilise their revenue from contributions during 1924, there were still a few committees whose income from this source was relatively very small. The situation depends largely on the financial organisation of the unions themselves, and partly, of course, on the rates of wages paid in the various branches of industry. Thus, where in 1924 the Central Committee of the Paper Workers' Union received an average of 1.44 roubles as contribution per member during a period of six months, that of the Agricultural Workers only received 0.15 roubles per member.

The total expenditure of the central committees has also gone up, and between May and June 1924 increased by one-third. The expenditure of the different committees varies greatly, but generally the managements of workers' unions are very economical as are those of the Soviet administration.

The following table shows the receipts and expenditure per member for the various central committees¹:

Branch of industry	Receipts (per member)	Expenditure
Soviet administration	0.47	0.29
Fine arts	0.45	0.36
Hotel trades	0.33	0.17
Paper	1.44	1.37
Sugar	0.86	0.81
Textiles	0.75	0.37
Printing	0.72	0.58
Chemical products	0.71	0.49
Metallurgy	0.66	0.36
Railways	0.60	0.48
Building	0.58	0.27
Navigation	0.57	0.72
Clothing	0.56	0.42
Mines	0.55	0.65
Leather	0.54	0.37
Municipal services	0.53	0.40
Local transport	0.53	0.37
P. T. T.	0.51	0.35
Food and drink trades	0.48	0.38
Wood	0.30	0.25
Public health	0.28	0.24
Education	0.23	0.15
Agriculture	0.15	0.21

¹ *Labour Messenger*, October 1924, pp. 17-21.

On an average the expenditure is divided as follows :

	Per cent.
Salaries of trade union officials	44.0
Organisation expenses	26.2
Payments to the A.C.C.T.U.	9.1
Reserve funds	20.7

As regards official salaries, the Textile Union has managed to reduce expenditure to 19.7 per cent. of its total income, but all the other unions spent much more under this heading. At present the central committees are endeavouring to cut down their expenditure to a minimum. They are even refusing to finance the poorer unions, and are building up large reserve funds by giving as little as possible towards organising expenses.

DEPARTMENTAL INTER-TRADE UNION COUNCILS

It was in these councils that the application of the economy measures decided on in February 1922 met with the greatest difficulties.

At the beginning of 1923 the majority of the councils showed a deficit equivalent to one-third of their total budget. Although they were still showing a deficit at the beginning of 1924, this was much less, and in the meantime their income had become more stable. In evidence of this, it should be stated that the contributions, which in January 1924 amounted to only 60.9 of the expenditure, covered 94.2 per cent. in the month of June. In these circumstances it is obvious that the councils had to depend to a certain extent on subsidies from the supreme trade union body, i.e. the A.C.C.T.U. Indeed, during the first half-year of 1924, these subsidies represented 27.9 per cent. of the total revenue of the councils. But it would appear that from June 1924 the councils were able to balance their budgets without having recourse to State subsidies.

Here again, as in the case of the central committees, it should be pointed out that the increase in revenue from contributions at the beginning of 1924 was partly due to the stabilisation of the currency, but reduction of expenditure was the chief factor in the improved financial position of the council. Notwithstanding all that has been done, there is still room for further cuts in administrative expenditure, and the number of officials employed could still be reduced by from 16 to 36 per cent.

THE CENTRAL TRADE UNION COUNCIL

In 1922 the amount received in contributions by the Central Council, which totalled 33,000,000 " 1922 " roubles, only covered 6 per cent. of the Council's expenditure (520,000,000). In 1923 the revenue from contributions amounted to 132,804 Chervonetz roubles, while subsidies received from the State amounted to 1,816,115 roubles. This means that contributions then covered about 7 per cent. of the total expenditure (1,885,587 roubles).

During the first nine months of 1924 the amount received in contributions was 377,000 roubles, or about 25.5 per cent. of the total revenue of the Council. The remainder of the Council's income was made up by subsidies granted specially for the maintaining of the Labour Palaces (or trade union headquarters) and rest houses, and to finance the provincial organisations which had fallen into debt. During these nine months 170,000 roubles were spent in the upkeep of the Labour Palaces, and 672,000 roubles in financing various organisations.

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Thus it is seen that although the financial situation of most of the trade union executive bodies has greatly improved, it still remains somewhat precarious for the inter-trade union bodies, which have no direct connection with the contributors.

In order to get an idea of the actual financial situation of the Russian trade union movement, it is necessary to study the period 1925-1926. The following statistics, prepared for the Seventh Trade Union Congress, illustrate the development of the financial situation during these two years¹. These statistics are divided into three groups: local organisations, central committees, and the Central Trade Union Council.

It should be noted that the following figures, relating to local organisation, cover the whole of 1925, but only the first half-year of 1926:

Trood, 30 Nov., 4 and 9 Dec. 1926.

INCOME

	1925 Roubles	1926 Roubles
Money in hand on 1 January	5,027,728	8,095,268
Contributions	64,436,956	44,846,000
Subsidies from higher organs	758,836	388,528
Various	3,099,766	1,031,985
Payments received to finance committees ¹	689,854	485,397
Total	74,013,140	54,847,178

EXPENSES

Staff salaries	17,944,584	12,342,504
Administration and material	5,186,292	2,992,122
Organisation (congresses, etc.)	5,409,516	4,114,168
Various (including property)	2,966,216	1,542,813
Payments to special funds	12,975,196	10,986,699
" " central committees	13,675,932	8,321,840
" " inter-trade union councils	5,953,740	4,301,176
" " subordinate organisations (subsidies)	1,806,396	1,309,053
Total	65,917,872	45,910,375
Credit balance	8,095,268	8,936,803

¹ Factory committees acting as trade union sections.

During both periods contributions formed the most important item of revenue. During 1926 (first half-year) contributions increased greatly, this being due to the increasing membership of the unions (8,800,000 members in 1926 as against 6,580,000 in 1925). During 1925, 93.8 per cent. of the contributions due were paid.

The most important items of expenditure were staff salaries and payments to special funds. The proportion of expenditure for salaries decreased from 31.8 per cent. in 1924 to 26.1 per cent. in 1925, to increase slightly again in 1926 to 26.4 per cent., while other expenses decreased in a relatively unimportant degree. Payments to special funds (unemployment, education, etc.) increased from 14.2 per cent. in 1924 to 17.5 per cent. and 23.5 per cent. in 1925 and 1926 respectively.

When the distribution of the administrative and other expenses is considered, it will be seen that the trade unionist gets about one-quarter of his total contributions back in one way or another. This, of course, is only an average, and whereas the metal worker is repaid 51 per cent. of his contributions in the form of assistance

and amusements, the agricultural worker gets only about 4 per cent.

Most of the local organisations have been able to accumulate reserve funds, with the exception of the following unions, which were in deficit during the last financial period :

	Deficit in percentage of total revenue
Agriculture	21.0
Sugar	19.0
Building	18.5
Inland water transport	17.0

The statistics concerning the central committees are as follows, and cover the whole of 1925 and the first half-year of 1926.

REVENUE

	1925 Roubles	1926 Roubles
Money in hand on 1 January	2,456,654	3,103,902
Share of contributions	8,950,966	6,327,754
Subsidies	63,500	"
Various	372,542	196,521
Total	12,743,662	9,628,177

EXPENDITURE

Staff salaries	1,883,886	1,109,514
Administration	740,438	390,298
Organisation	1,321,229	1,053,918
Various	1,036,908	663,682
Payments to A.C.C.T.U.	1,355,664	878,952
" " special funds	2,829,154	1,556,803
" " subordinate organisations	472,481	350,166
Total	9,639,760	6,105,333
Credit balance	3,103,902	3,524,844

It will be seen that almost the entire income was derived from the share of the contributions paid by the local organisations. The subsidies granted to the committees during 1925 were on behalf of the agricultural workers' unions.

Administrative expenditure increased from 48.4 per cent. to 51.6 per cent., and there was also an increase in the payments made to the special funds (from 6 to 24.3 per cent.). This surplus

expenditure was financed by drawing on the reserve capital, with the result that the credit balance of the committees decreased from 27.7 per cent. in 1924 to 12.5 per cent. in 1925 and 4.9 per cent. in 1926. Subsidies to local organisations amounted to 472,481 roubles, or 4.8 per cent. of the total budget of the committees. Nevertheless, in the opinion of the trade union leaders, these credits are inadequate. In support of this opinion the leaders point out that, of 1,020 organisations covered by an enquiry, 272 were in debt for a total amount of 428,226 roubles. As there are 3,300 local organisations, and if it is assumed that the proportion of the debt is the same as for those organisations not included in the enquiry, it is obvious that the subsidies granted by the central committees cover only one-third of the total deficit.

The financial position of the Central Trade Union Council may be summed up as follows :

The share of the contributions received was equivalent to 61 per cent. of the total receipts in 1925, and 95.7 per cent. in 1926. The administrative expenses are decreasing, while special payments are increasing.

To sum up, it may be said that at the end of 1926 the financial situation of the trade unions had on the whole become very satisfactory¹. There are still a number of local organisations which are working at a loss, but their deficits are small and unimportant (1,555 roubles, on an average, per organisation). Trade union leaders nevertheless insist that these organisations should keep closer to the principles of a central fund. Again, some organisations have large reserves, while others are struggling with debt. And it is certain that further reductions could be made in the administration expenses, especially in the grant of travelling allowances, which are much too generous.

§ 4. — Administrative Reorganisation

Entrusted during the Communist period with numerous official duties, and endowed with credits much larger than were required for purposes of internal administration, the trade unions, whose expenditure until 1922 was almost entirely financed by State subsidies, had recruited an unnecessarily large number of officials, and had multiplied their administrative expenditure, with the

¹ Attention will be drawn later to the one bad feature of the present situation, namely, dishonesty among trade union officials.

result that finally it became necessary to make reductions under these two headings.

But at the beginning of the reorganisation period, and doubtless to avoid wholesale dismissal of officials, efforts to reduce expenditure were chiefly concentrated on what might be called the productive work of the unions (educational and relief work, etc.). Gradually, however, under pressure from the masses, who finally wanted to know what was being done with their money, it was decided to reduce the number of trade union officials and all expenses of a purely administrative character.

As a matter of fact, the number of trade union executives and the strength of their staffs have been greatly reduced since 1922. An example of this is the A.C.C.T.U., which reduced the number of its employees from 319 in October 1922 to 215 in April 1924.

There has also been a reduction made in the number of officials employed by the departmental inter-trade union councils, but here the "axe" has not been so sweeping. In 1923 each official dealt on an average with 2,300 trade unionists, and in 1924 with 3,000.

As regards the district inter-trade union offices, efforts were at first made to replace them by inter-trade union delegates, and subsequently the management of inter-trade union matters in certain districts was entrusted to the executive of one of the more important unions. Thus the number of inter-trade union officials has been largely reduced, and in January 1924 each official dealt with 1,724 members, as compared with 1,152 members in July 1923. The reduction of staff in the central committees began in 1922, and the number of officials has been reduced from 1,677 in January 1922 to 1,086 in January 1924.

The number of departmental sections¹ of the various unions has undergone little change, but certain of them have transferred their functions to factory committees of importance.

As regards the departmental executives, however, it would appear that their staffs have latterly slightly increased, and there is on an average one official for every 337 members instead of 500, as stipulated by the Fifth Congress.

District organisations have been largely simplified, and some of them have transferred their duties to factory committees and others to trade union delegates. On an average there is in these organisations one official for every 251 members.

¹ Sometimes called regional committees.

In January 1924 the total number of trade union and inter-trade union officials was 23,881, which figures represent a decrease of 20 per cent. in comparison with those of the previous year.

The following table shows the number of trade union and inter-trade union organisations in existence at the end of 1925 ¹.

TRADE UNION EXECUTIVES

Central committees	23
Central managements (in the various republics)	138
Tertiary organs :	
Provincial or departmental sections	161
Secondary organs :	
District subsections	2,048
Area subsections	1,171
Delegates acting for subsections	502

INTER-TRADE UNION ORGANISATIONS

Central Council A.C.C.T.U.	1
Provincial offices of the A.C.C.T.U.	4
Inter-trade union councils of the various republics	16
Departmental and regional inter-trade union councils	59
District inter-trade union offices	312
Area inter-trade union offices	115
Delegates acting for inter-trade union offices	47

In addition to the inter-trade union organisations, there are about 1,000 local secretariats which unite the workers in those districts where it is impossible or undesirable to set up unions.

In this work of reorganisation the idea of extending the system of branch organisations throughout the various departments and districts has been largely abandoned. A certain number of executives have been abolished, and their duties entrusted to less important organisations. In certain cases attempts have been made to concentrate all the executive bodies of a given region in a single institution and to make them mere sections of the inter-trade union executive.

There is a general tendency no longer to adhere strictly to the trade union hierarchy, which is being sacrificed in order to allow the unions to get into closer touch with the people. Great importance is attached to the work of the factory committees, and their functions have been clearly defined by the Labour Code.

¹ *Labour Statistics*, 1926, Nos. 4-5.

It is therefore important to understand the main features of organisation of the factory committees and like bodies, which, at the end of 1925, numbered roughly 50,000 (56,000 according to the report submitted to the Seventh Trade Union Congress). These organisations are classified as follows¹: factory committees, 6,633; local committees and committees of workers, 34,264; committees of groups of small-scale enterprises, 8,778; total, 49,675.

To these should be added the numerous delegates of small-scale undertakings employing less than 35 workers.

Towards the end of 1923 the A.C.C.T.U. made an enquiry into the formation of the various committees, but this was far from being complete, as it only covered 7,559 undertakings (21 per cent. of the total number), employing 1,638,389 workers (or 30 per cent. of the total number of trade unionists). The results of this enquiry are summarised in the following table².

Branches of employment	Number of committees examined	Number of members	Average number of workers per member
Agriculture	548	1,532	15.7
Industry	2,735	10,096	104.6
Communications	612	2,170	80.7
Institutions	3,183	9,134	31.4
Municipal services	481	1,662	51.3

It has already been mentioned that Art. 159 of the Labour Code grants exemption from work to a certain proportion of the members of the committees. This proportion varies greatly according to the different branches of employment:

	In percentage
Agriculture	31.5
Industry	60.9
Communications	63.0
Institutions	36.0
Municipal services	52.2

From these figures it may be estimated that about 10,000 workers in the undertakings included in the enquiry were occupied solely with trade union matters. According to the statistics submitted to the Seventh Congress, the number of members of factory committees

¹ *Labour Statistics*, 1926, Nos. 4-5.

² *Verbatim Report of the A.C.C.T.U. to the Sixth Congress*, p. 87.

is at present about 226,000, of whom 28,000 are totally exempted from all productive work.

Besides factory committees, there are also 870,000 workshop delegates in large-scale industry, and another 642,000 trade unionists also take part in the work of the factory committees. So that altogether 1,788,000 persons are engaged in one capacity or another in the work of the factory committees.

From a purely trade union point of view the changes which were introduced in 1922 and afterwards were of small importance. At that period a scheme of organisation for most of the all-Russian unions was more or less definitely established, although certain unions which had previously amalgamated (railway transport with inland transport workers, educational workers with fine art workers) subsequently broke apart again.

At present there are 23 all-Russian trade unions, covering the following branches of employment :

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Agriculture and forestry. | 13. Clothing. |
| 2. Paper. | 14. Water transport. |
| 3. Mines. | 15. Railway transport. |
| 4. Wood. | 16. Local transport. |
| 5. Leather. | 17. Postal and telegraphic services. |
| 6. Metallurgy. | 18. Fine arts. |
| 7. Printing. | 19. Education. |
| 8. Food and drink trades. | 20. Public health. |
| 9. Sugar. | 21. Soviet and commercial admini- |
| 10. Building and public works. | strations. |
| 11. Textiles. | 22. Municipal employees. |
| 12. Chemical industry. | 23. Hotels and restaurants. |

The only difficulties that arise are in connection with the affiliation of various members to the all-Russian unions¹. These generally arise through the central committees of the unions endeavouring to increase their membership by affiliating workers engaged in trades similar to their own. On the grounds that a small enterprise is providing a larger enterprise with half-finished products, the union of the larger establishments endeavours to absorb the less important undertaking.

At the beginning of 1926 the definite classification of the various unions was far from being complete, and although much has since been accomplished in this connection, a certain amount of discussion

¹ In three months (November 1921-January 1922) 277 re-classifications were made (*Verbatim Report of the A.C.C.T.U.*, 1921-1922, p. 79.)

is still continuous. During 1926 the Woodcutters' Union was withdrawn from the Federation of Wood Workers, and the sugar plantation workers were transferred from the Sugar Workers' Union to that of agricultural workers.

Attention must here again be drawn to the decision of the Second Congress to form trade union sections corresponding to certain professions. Until 1921 the number of these sections was small, and their activities were extremely restricted, for fear of a recrudescence of the corporative spirit. In 1921, however, the Fourth Congress promised to give the sections more ample opportunities for development, and these promises were reiterated and extended at the Second Assembly of the Central Trade Union Council held in February 1922. The following month the Council issued special regulations giving greatly increased autonomy to the sections and allowing them to issue a periodical. But the majority of the unions remained hostile, with the result that the spread of the sections was very restricted, being confined mainly to the technical and engineering trades. There is, however, a special section for technical workers in most of the unions, the functions of these bodies being determined by regulations issued by the Central Trade Union Council ¹. Altogether, 17 sections, grouping 91,000 engineers and technical workers are in existence ², and permission has been granted them to set up a sort of inter-trade union office. Special sections also exist in the unions of public health and educational workers for doctors and scientists respectively.

At present there is a distinct tendency to increase the number of special sections. At the Seventh Trade Union Congress Tomsky recommended the formation of special trade sections in all the large unions as a means of ensuring closer relations between the various groups of workers. It is, of course, understood that these sections will in no way be autonomous bodies, as this would be a contradiction of the famous formula "one undertaking — one union

¹ *Trood*, 20 Aug. 1926.

² *Ibid.*, 20 Oct. 1926.

PART III

**THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY
OF THE TRADE UNIONS**

CHAPTER I

THE ORGANISATION OF ECONOMIC LIFE

§ 1. — Workers' Control

The first task assigned by the Communists to the trade unions in 1917 was to collaborate actively in the organisation of the economic life of the country, but during the earlier days of the revolution very little progress was made in this matter, for reasons which have already been indicated. At that period, moreover, the Government had no definite notion of how to employ the unions, which, in any case, were very short of really active workers.

The trade unions were requested to concentrate their attention first of all on the organisation of workers' control. This question was the subject of a Decree dated 14 November 1917¹, one of the earliest Decrees of the new Government.

The Decree stated that "control shall be exercised by the workers in each undertaking as a whole through the medium of their duly elected representatives . . . working in conjunction with the delegates appointed by the salaried employees and technical staff".

The Decree further provided for the setting up of (1) regional control commissions attached to the corresponding Soviets and composed of representatives from the trade unions, factory committees, and co-operative societies, and (2) an All-Russian Workers' Council for Workers' Control, composed of ten members from the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, five from the A.C.C.T.U., five from the Central Office of Factory Committees, five from the Union of Engineers and Technical Workers, five from the Agriculturists' Union, and one or two members from each of the Central Union Offices, etc.

¹ *Collection of Laws*, 1917, No. 3.

A distinct tendency to centralise workers' control was shown, and decisions taken by the local control authorities could be cancelled by the higher authorities.

The First Trade Union Congress supported the idea of centralising the executive powers and even went beyond the Decree in a resolution which stated that :

In order that workers' control may be of the greatest benefit to the proletariat, it is absolutely essential to avoid weakening it by granting the workers of any given undertaking the right to take final decisions on questions affecting the very existence of the undertaking.

The Congress further expressed the desire that the trade unions should be entrusted with the general management of workers' control :

The trade unions, organised to correspond to the various branches of industry, must take their place in the committees of control set up in the urban and rural districts, and they must assume the leadership in all matters of organisation and policy ¹.

These proposals were embodied in general instructions issued on 15 November 1917 for the enforcement of the Decree on workers' control, whereby the Government vested the entire management of workers' control in the trade unions.

The primary organ of control is the commission for workers' control attached to the factory committee in each undertaking, the secondary organ being the trade union committee for the branch of industry to which the undertaking in question belongs. Furthermore, " the All-Russian Council for Workers' Control may require the all-Russian trade unions (or regional unions) of any given branch of industry to form an all-Russian (or regional) committee for workers' control in the branch of industry in question " ².

The system of workers' control was, however, destined to have a very short existence, and even in February 1918 the authorities had begun to think of abandoning it altogether.

At the first session of the Supreme Economic Council held during the following month, Larine admitted that the attempt to set up workers' control had been a failure. It should be mentioned that at this period the Government had decided mercilessly to suppress all attempts on the part of workers to take possession of

¹ *Verbatim Report of First Congress*, pp. 369-372.

² LABRY : *A Communist Legislation*, pp. 135-137.

the factories, and that it was generally felt that the control was worthless :

What has workers' control given us up to the present ? It must be recognised that its results have not always been satisfactory. In many undertakings the place of the former proprietor has been taken since the revolution by another proprietor, who is just as individualist and anti-social as the former ; this new proprietor is the control committee.

In the Donetz Basin the metal workers and miners, while mutually refusing to make deliveries of coal and iron on credit, are selling their output to the peasants without any regard to State interests — and all this is being done in the name of workers' control. Again, the control committees in many undertakings are demanding State subsidies for their undertakings, and at their suggestion a large number of small enterprises with obsolete plant have been nationalised and have become a heavy burden on the State ¹.

The last phrase of the above quotation discloses the real reason for the change of policy. The nationalised enterprises were becoming ever more numerous, and it had become a question of workers' control directing State undertakings rather than private ownership. As Lenin said, " workers' control is gradually changing into a scheme of industrial administration by the workers ".

§ 2. — The Management of National Economy during the Communist Period

The Soviet Government had not awaited the results of the experiment in workers' control before launching their plan of industrial organisation. Three weeks after the appearance of the Decree on workers' control, which had, moreover, forecast the creation of " other institutions to deal with the organisation of national economy ", the Supreme Economic Council (S.E.C.) was created to manage the economic and industrial life of the country. It should be noted, however, that in its early days the Supreme Economic Council was formed by adding representatives from the various national commissariats and technical experts to the All-Russian Council for Workers' Control.

THE SUPREME ECONOMIC COUNCIL (S.E.C.)

Here again the trade unions were called on to perform a rôle of first importance which, several months later, was to become even

¹ *Izvestia*, 12-13 April 1923.

more marked. Indeed, in July 1918, when the composition of the S.E.C. was revised, 30 out of 69 members were appointed directly by the unions.

At the same time, the unions were asked to direct the central organisations created and subordinated to the S.E.C. These were the *Glavki* or Central Committees appointed to manage the affairs of the various branches of industry. These organisations — about fifty in number — were managed by boards chosen by the trade union of the corresponding branch of industry and approved by the S.E.C.

The real importance of the duties entrusted to the unions will be seen by the following summary of the duties of the S.E.C. :

The primary function of the Supreme Economic Council is to organise the economic activity of the country and the financial resources of the Government. With these aims in view, the S.E.C. will draw up a general plan and propose the necessary measures for the sound organisation of national economy. It will also co-ordinate in a general scheme the activities of the various economic organisations (the committees dealing with the organisation of the fuel, metal and provision trades, the Commissariats of Commerce and Industry, Supplies, Agriculture, Finance, the Army and Navy, etc.), the All-Russian Council of Workers' Control, and the various organisations of the working classes.

The Supreme Economic Council is entitled to confiscate, requisition, sequester, and oblige the different branches of industry and commerce to form unions, to take the necessary steps to increase output, and to facilitate the distribution of merchandise and the financial resources of the State.

The Decree of 17 March also conferred the following rights, *inter alia*, on the *Glavki* : (1) the monopoly of importation and exportation of manufactured goods ; (2) the right to centralise all measures necessary for the supply of industry with the requisite raw materials, plant, and equipment, as well as for the sale of all industrial output delivered to them, and to accept new orders.

The unions were thus called on to play an important and even decisive part in the different national commissariats, the S.E.C., and the other executive bodies of the nation's economy. This was an overwhelming task, especially at a time when the technical workers, exasperated beyond measure by harsh treatment, were no longer able nor willing to help in the scheme of reorganisation. And yet these duties, vast as they were, were subsequently added to by the nationalisation, at first sporadic, but afterwards methodical, of the industrial undertakings.

THE MANAGEMENT OF NATIONALISED INDUSTRY

From the beginning of the nationalisation scheme, the number of nationalised undertakings increased rapidly. In the early days, nationalisation was effected without any plan or method, and any pretext was seized on to nationalise an undertaking. The somewhat arbitrary initiative of the local organisations tended to increase the general disorganisation¹. In virtue of the Decree of 3 March 1918, all undertakings abandoned by their owners were to be managed by a board composed of equal numbers of workers, technical workers, and representatives of the S.E.C. In exceptional cases, the local workers' organisations were entrusted with the management of such undertakings.

It is extremely probable that the first legislative measures relating to the administration of undertakings did no more than sanction the procedure already established, with the result that it was very difficult to abolish this procedure when a definite nationalisation scheme was introduced.

A systematic scheme was introduced only on 20 June 1918. A Decree published on that date stated that, until further notification by the S.E.C., the undertakings already nationalised are "considered as leased free of charge to their former owners". Instructions issued on 30 August on the management of nationalised enterprises went no further than mentioning the control exercised on the management by the workers' organisations. This control, however, led to numerous disputes between the workers' control committees and the management and technical staff. And it was just about this time that the Communist leaders felt the necessity of appealing for the help of the technical workers.

In his pamphlet *The Soviets at Work*, Lenin says that "the attack on capitalism has resulted in a victory, but it is necessary that the middle class take part in the subsequent work so that they may never again be tempted to establish the old order of things".

Hence it became necessary to determine the relative positions of the working and technical staffs in the management of industry. The plan adopted to give satisfaction to both parties, and, at the

¹ ARSKY, in *The Organisation of Industry*, p. 17, states that of the 500 undertakings nationalised before the First Congress of National Economy, at least 400 were nationalised by the orders of local authorities.

same time, to promote the smooth running of affairs, seems to have been based on the principles described below. The trade unions had the right to nominate the majority of members of the executives of the various undertakings and economic organisations, but it was understood that the technical workers could and had to form part of the workers' union. There was therefore nothing to prevent technical workers from being nominated to managerial posts.

These measures were obviously intended to act as a buffer between the opposing claims of the economic organisations and the trade unions, which, it may be noted, showed a distinct tendency to multiply their demands. Indeed, at the Second Trade Union Congress held in January 1919, the speaker delegated to report on industrial organisation and workers' control went so far as to demand that the various governing bodies of the undertakings should be composed solely of workers' delegates. The resolution finally adopted by the Congress on this subject required that the boards of the *Glavki* should have a majority of workers' representatives.

The trade unionists argued as follows. Everyone is complaining of the bureaucratic spirit which reigns in the management of national economy. In order to abolish this bureaucracy, it is essential to replace the former administrative staff, which was composed of technical workers, by capable representatives of the workers' union. Thus, in spite of the statement that no friction existed between the *Glavki* and the trade unions, the resolution voted by the Congress on workers' control shows clearly that a certain amount of friction did exist :

The grasp of the working classes on the economic life of the country is not complete, and there are signs that a silent struggle is being waged against the new economic order. This necessitates strict control being exercised by the masses on the activities of the new management of industry.

^ The Congress concluded by confirming the measures previously adopted concerning the local and higher organs of workers' control.

COLLECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE UNDERTAKINGS

During 1918 and 1919 governing bodies were set up in a large number of works and factories in Russia. By the end of 1919, the entire industry of the country had been grouped in 90 industrial groups (trusts), and 4,000 governing bodies had been set up by the

united efforts of the trade unions and the economic organisations. It would appear that it was in the metal trades, where trade union activity was most developed, that this movement showed the widest and most rapid development. Indeed, the metal workers' union played quite an outstanding part in the organisation of industry, and, during 1918, 184 governing bodies, composed altogether of 338 workers, 45 employees, and 146 engineers, were appointed. Considerable organising ability was also displayed in the textile trades, where, by the end of 1919, 460 governing bodies, including 1,124 persons (726 workers and 398 technical workers) had been set up. These figures are more than sufficient to show what an important part was played by the trade unions in the management of the undertakings.

The trade union leaders, realising the strength of their position at the end of 1919, began to express the opinion that the entire economic system of the country should be managed by the trade unions from top to bottom. This idea naturally did not find favour in the higher economic administrative circles, where there was a tendency to limit the collaboration of the unions to questions relating to the general welfare of the workers. In this connection, the Second Trade Union Congress, when discussing measures to increase national output, went so far as to consider the re-establishment of individual management in the undertakings. This proposal was to lead to passionate controversies between the unions and the economic authorities.

The trade union leaders steadfastly supported the scheme of industrial management by governing bodies ; but during the summer of 1919 several of the Soviet leaders began to demand that the undertakings should no longer be managed by these bodies, but by single managers having complete responsibility.

Gradually these opposing views led to bitter controversy. The trade unionists, jealous of the influence of the technical workers on the masses, did not wish to allow them to reoccupy those places in industry for which their technical knowledge and experience fitted them. At the same time, a considerable amount of discord reigned between those Communists who had specialised in trade union matters and the remainder of the Communist Party. The debates, often extremely heated, which took place at the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party, held in March-April 1920, are very enlightening. Certain members of the Central Committee of the party even went so far as to accuse the Communist members of

the Central Trade Union Council of wishing to set up a sort of select trade union group, or *Glavk* of trade unionism :

The workers' organisations are gradually assuming the selfish character of the Anglo-Saxon trade unions, and are showing opposition to the Soviets and authority in general. Certain Communists, displaying a somewhat unbalanced mentality, are endeavouring to wrest privileges for the unions from the party itself ¹.

This opposition became so strongly defined that the Communist Party took the precaution to postpone the Trade Union Congress which should have preceded that of the party, as they considered that " if the Congress were to approve the principle of industrial management by governing bodies, the Party Congress would find it very difficult to vote a contrary resolution " ².

This movement was all the more to be feared as several Trade Union Congresses had already voiced the same principles.

In his thesis published on 10 March 1920 ³, Tomsky maintains that " the only sure method of guaranteeing the collaboration of the masses through the trade unions is to maintain the present principle of collective management through the whole economic system. Only in special cases can individual management be tolerated, and then only under the direct supervision of the unions. "

In the end, the trade union thesis was rejected by the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party, and the Third Trade Union Congress was consequently obliged to accept this decision. The discussion, however, had brought to light the great divergencies of opinion which existed between those Communists who, like Tomsky, were well-informed on trade union matters, and the rest of the party. In this conflict the trade unionists lost the first round, but not by much, as their adversaries were far from being united. Lenin himself was still rather undecided, though firmly resolved to do everything to encourage the technical workers. The argument broke out afresh some months later, when Trotsky and his followers took the opportunity to advocate their extremist principles. The Congress of the Communist Party, however, adopted as a compromise a resolution which allowed the question of the adoption of the system of individual management to be temporarily postponed.

¹ Krestinsky's speech, *Report of the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party*, p. 71.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ekonomicheskaja Zhizn*, 10 March 1920.

According to this resolution, the manager might be either an experienced trade unionist or a technical worker aided by a trade union official (or by trade unionists in a consultative capacity). And it was understood that when it gave satisfactory results, the system of collective management could be maintained.

At the same time, the Congress asked the members of the Communist Party to organise intensive propaganda among the working classes on behalf of the technical workers.

TRADE UNION CO-OPERATION IN ECONOMIC MATTERS

As a matter of fact, the part played by the trade unions in the economic life of the country was in no way diminished by these events, as may be seen from a glance at the following table, which shows the origin of the officials employed in the administrative departments of the national economy ¹.

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL STATUS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF
OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE SUPREME ECONOMIC COUNCIL

Date	Workers	Higher grade officials	Lower grade officials	State employees	Militant trade unionists and Communists
	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
1 August 1919	20.2	29.6	22.6	10.5	3.1
1 September 1926	26.0	35.0	15.0	4.4	4.4

The number of workers and militant socialists has increased in about the same proportion as the highly specialised workers. It should be pointed out, however, that the results of the enquiries carried out vary considerably according to the branches of industry concerned. In managements corresponding to powerful unions, workers' representation is extremely large (metal trades 50 per cent., sugar workers 100 per cent., printing 100 per cent.).

¹ *Composition of S.E.C. and its Departments.* Moscow, 1922.

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL STATUS OF GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS
OF DEPARTMENTAL ECONOMIC COUNCILS

Date	Workers	Higher grade officials	Lower grade officials	Militants	Various
	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
1919	34.7	1.0	9.5	—	54.8
1921	42.5	7.4	14.4	4.0	31.7

Of the 174 members covered by the enquiry, 102 had been proposed by the trade union organisations, 55 by the organisations of the Communist Party, and 17 by the Departmental Economic Councils. Here, again, the strongest unions managed to obtain the largest representation.

Comparative figures are wanting concerning the administrative services of the Departmental Councils. All that can be said is that, according to an enquiry carried out in 1921 and covering 1,085 persons, 392, or 36 per cent., were the nominees of the trade union organisations, most of them being technical workers.

The Managements of Undertakings

According to an enquiry made in 1921, 33.5 of the 831 managers of undertakings were workers, 0.2 per cent. militant trade unionists, and 19.7 per cent. higher grade officials. Of the 585 assistant managers 38.5 per cent. were workers, 0.4 per cent. militant trade unionists, and 17.2 per cent. higher grade officials. As in all other cases, the more strongly organised unions were the most strongly represented. In the metal industry workers occupied two-thirds of the managerial posts.

Thus, at the end of 1920, the workers' organisations found themselves strongly represented in the management of economic affairs. As a matter of fact, this had been more or less so since 1919. The chief changes which had taken place concerned rather the system — individual or collective — of management. According to enquiries made in 1919, all the principal committees (*Glavki*) or industrial managements were collective, while in 1921 only 13 out of 36 had retained this form of management.

In 1921, the executive organs of the Departmental Economic Councils were still collective bodies, though the number of members showed a considerable decrease. The administrative services of these Councils, however, were almost all managed individually (81.6 per cent.).

Finally, of the 831 undertakings examined in 1921, 789 had individual managements as against 592 in 1920, 90 in 1919, and 28 in 1918.

Summarising the situation on the eve of the introduction of the NEP, it may be said that the trade unions were completely masters of the undertakings. If in certain enterprises they did not constitute the entire governing body, or if they had to give way before a responsible manager, they had contrived to impose on this manager an adviser whose counsels had to be followed.

In the higher economic organisations the influence of the trade unions was largely counterbalanced by that of the Communists with special knowledge in economic matters, and sometimes even by that of the highly-skilled workers, who, on account of their technical knowledge, had gained the ear of the Soviet authorities.

A discussion which took place at the end of 1920 showed the crack which had appeared in the huge national economic structure. Attention has already been drawn to the results of this discussion, and it has been described how in 1920 they were utilised as grounds for the change in trade union policy which was to take place in 1922. On the termination of this discussion, it was clearly understood by all parties that the trade unions must eventually renounce all pretensions to the management of national economy. This discussion was merely the first step against trade union participation in the management of industry. Some weeks later, when the NEP was brought more clearly into the limelight, the trade unions perceived in a somewhat confused manner that their rôle was changing, and that they had to rejoin battle with private capitalism, resuscitated and reinstated in its former place by the NEP itself.

§ 3. — Trade Union Participation in Economic Organisation after the NEP

MANAGEMENT OF THE UNDERTAKINGS

Until the end of 1921 the trade unions showed almost complete indifference to questions of economic organisation. As a matter of fact, they really did not quite understand the bearing of the new economic policy, and although they were fully prepared to resist any renewed attacks from capitalism, they did not know what attitude to adopt towards the economic organisations.

It is true that, when the Government began in August 1921 to set up the first industrial groups to be run on commercial lines, the trade unions insisted on being consulted as to the appointment of the managements of the trusts. But from then until the end of 1921 they showed no further interest in economic matters. It has already been stated that at the end of December 1921 the Central Committee of the Communist Party adopted a resolution defining the duties of the trade unions. The essential point of this resolution was that in all matters of industrial management full powers were given to the responsible managers. The trade unions were, however, required to take part in economic organisation, and to propose candidates for the higher administrative posts.

The unions recognised the commonsense behind these proposals, and took immediate steps to get into touch with the economic organisations with a view to defining their respective duties. The result was that the A.C.C.T.U. and the S.E.C. issued a joint circular in November 1923, the main points of which are given below.

In the first place the trade unions relinquished their share in the administration of the undertakings. This decision was couched in the following terms :

The directing economic organisations (trusts, administrations, etc.) have full authority in all matters connected with the management of the undertakings entrusted to them. They are fully responsible for management, and cannot therefore give trade union intervention as an excuse for inadequate output in the industry. In these circumstances, it is inadmissible that the trade unions should interfere in any way with the management of the undertakings.

The resolution goes on to define the consultative function of the unions as follows :

When appointing the managing bodies of trusts or separate undertakings, the economic organisations must invite the trade unions to submit candidates, and must give them the lists of their candidates; although the final decision lies in the hands of the economic organisations,

nominations must be examined . . . in co-operation with the trade unions.

Finally, the right of the trade unions to supervise the economic life of the country was defined in the following manner :

The trade unions must be represented on committees for drafting the programmes of the economic organisations . . . the designation of undertakings to form part of a trust . . . or to be leased . . . foreign business relations, the determination of branches of industry in which joint companies may be formed, the examination of conditions under which private capital may be admitted to Russian industry. . . .

Emphasis should be laid on this last point, as several unions interpreted the resolutions of the Communist Party as signifying the complete renunciation on the part of the trade unions of participation in economic organisation.

Whatever was behind these resolutions, it did not prevent the trade unions — or, at least, their higher executive bodies — from showing, from the beginning of 1922, renewed interest in economic questions. Their scope of action was, however, greatly reduced, except in the case of the solution of the vital question of wages.

During the Session held in December 1922, the A.C.C.T.U. reminded the unions that to establish a sound wage policy it was essential that they should fully understand and make allowances for the various factors affecting national economy, and that therefore they should establish close contact with the various official economic departments. In spite of this advice, the trade unions, more especially the lower organisations, established this contact in a very dilatory manner.

When, however, the trade unions began, at the end of 1922, to take a new interest in economic matters, the economic organisations did all in their power to discourage them. An official Order ¹ on the constitution of trusts published on 10 April 1923 reveals the attitude of the economic organisations in this matter: " Relations between the trade unions and the trusts are determined by the special legislation in force or to be introduced." No mention is made of the trade unions either in connection with the nomination of directors (this being reserved of the S.E.C.) or with the management of the undertakings. The only representation granted them was on auditing committees, and there they could only appoint one member in three.

During 1923 a considerable amount of discussion arose in

¹ *Izvestia*, 12-13 April 1923.

connection with these questions, and the following resolution of the A.C.C.T.U., adopted at its Session of December 1923, on organisation of industry, is typical of this period :

The A.C.C.T.U. fully approves of the attempts that have been made to establish the exact legal status of the trust . . . but considers it necessary to point out that no changes tending to restrict the rights of the trade unions can be made in the actual relations between the economic organisations and the unions.

At the same time the A.C.C.T.U. took up a definite position against the proposed formation of a new institution called the Council of Commercial, Industrial, and Transport Congresses. The Council considered that this organisation should not be permanent, but should be merely a consultative body of the S.E.C., entrusted with the preparatory work for congresses and conferences. And there is no doubt that the A.C.C.T.U. feared that the new institution might finally oppose the economic organisations on the one hand and the trade unions on the other.

About this time the A.C.C.T.U. again drew the attention of the unions to the necessity of their participation in the auditing committees of the trusts. It furthermore obtained promises from the S.E.C. that every facility would be granted to trade union members of the committees in the execution of their mandate¹.

These facts all point clearly to the antagonism which towards the end of 1923 existed between the economic authorities and the trade unions. And this was just the moment when the Government was engaged in drawing up its scheme of currency reform, and consequently had great need of the collaboration of the unions. This was undoubtedly the reason why the Thirteenth Conference of the Communist Party advocated the granting of greater authority to the unions in the management and supervision of the economic organisation and in the election of officials to these bodies. A circular issued by the Communist Party on 24 February 1924 went even further, and insisted on the participation of the factory committees in the productive work of the undertakings.

Thus the trade unions were not only permitted but also encouraged to take an interest in economic matters.

REPRESENTATION IN THE OFFICIAL ECONOMIC ORGANISATIONS

It was not enough merely to encourage the unions to take part in the economic management of the country, but means had to be

¹ Circular of the A.C.C.T.U., *Trood*, 7 Jan. 1924.

found to direct these activities into useful channels. This, however, turned out to be no easy task. In the first place the unions were advised to keep themselves well informed on current events, and, with this purpose in view, to take part in the various congresses and conferences which were continually being held. According to the A.C.C.T.U.¹, their task was not always facilitated for them by the economic organisations, which, wishing to keep the unions in the dark, often withheld important documents from them. Again, the general economic situation did not help the unions in their endeavours to get information on the economic situation. A survey of the events of the previous four years only tends to bring to light an unbroken series of financial and economic crises, which brought to nought all efforts to obtain an exact idea of the situation in the several branches of industry. The various aspects of the work undertaken by the unions may be described as follows.

The A.C.C.T.U. was represented in the following institutions : the Council of People's Commissaries, the Council of Labour and Defence, the Economic Conference of the R.S.F.S.R., the Central Concessions Committee, the *Gosplan* (State Planning Commission), the Supreme Economic Council, the Commissariats of Inspection, Labour, Supplies (until its suppression), Transport, Agriculture, Finance, the *Centrosoyus*, etc.

This permanent representation was assured by 42 trade unionists, of whom 13 were appointed by the A.C.C.T.U. and 29 by the trade union central committees. Most effective collaboration was established with the *Gosplan* and S.E.C., the A.C.C.T.U. having representatives in 11 sections of the former and in 20 sections of the latter. In accordance with a circular issued in May 1925, the A.C.C.T.U. and the inter-trade union councils were to take part in the discussion of all central and local budgets as far as the wage and revenue chapters were concerned. Subsequently the A.C.C.T.U. has also taken part in the regulation of home trade.

Until the end of 1923 the trade unions had shown little or no interest in commercial questions, and it was only at the moment when the Government endeavoured to lower market prices with a view to facilitating the proposed currency reform that they showed any signs of renewed activity. In this connection the A.C.C.T.U. considered that the desired result could be achieved by throwing large quantities of goods on the market.

¹ *Report for 1923-1924*, p. 234.

As regards foreign trade, the A.C.C.T.U., which co-operated through the *Gosplan* in the elaboration of the importation and exportation policy, was instrumental in drawing attention to the necessity of cutting down the importation of articles which could easily be manufactured in Russia itself.

Finally, the realisation of the currency reform forced the trade unions to follow with greater attention the business operations of the workers' co-operative societies.

It is thus seen that the field of activity open to the trade unions is extremely vast. But, as a matter of fact, according to the statement made by Tomskey at the Seventh Trade Union Congress, "trade union representation is arranged without any method, and the unions send delegates to all possible organisations". In the majority of cases the delegate appointed to an economic committee has no knowledge of the subjects under discussion, which he has had neither the time nor the means to study. All he is able to do is to give his formal assent to the measures adopted, at the risk of bearing the entire responsibility for them in the eyes of the working classes.

For these reasons there is a distinct tendency to reduce the number of delegates appointed; according to Tomskey, "the present system must cease, and delegates must be sent only where they are really required, and where their activities can be controlled from headquarters".

RELATIONS WITH THE STATE ECONOMIC ORGANISATIONS

It has been seen that, on the formation of trusts, the trade unions had demanded to be consulted, and that the Central Committee of the Communist Party, by a circular dated 28 December 1921, had decided that the trade unions should participate in the organisation of all institutions connected with national economy by proposing candidates, whose length of service and experience, etc., they were to indicate. The actual right of nomination, however, belonged entirely to the economic organisations, which bore the whole responsibility for the smooth working of industry. Nevertheless, the economic organisations had to give consideration to the qualifications of all candidates proposed by the trade unions.

It would seem, according to the report of the A.C.C.T.U. for 1923-1924, and statements made at the Seventh Congress in

December 1926, that the trade unions, have practically renounced these rights on account of shortage of competent officials. At the beginning of 1923, of 875 members of the administrative staff of 300 trusts, only 23.2 per cent. were workers. At the present moment the trade unions, instead of proposing candidates, confine themselves to examining and approving the lists proposed by the economic organs, and it is very rare that the unions oppose a nominee of these bodies.

The result is that the trade unions have very few representatives in the economic administration. That they are well aware of this is shown by the statement made by Andreev to the Seventh Congress, that the managers of industry were "often complete strangers to the unions". Andreev further stated that the trade unions ought to propose more candidates for the economic posts. The steps taken in this direction have so far been very disappointing for the workers, who prefer definite chances of improving their material situation to service in an administrative capacity where their social position does not improve, and where they have to put in long probationary periods and are often transferred from post to post. In short, skilled workers categorically refuse to endanger their livelihood in this manner, and much prefer the possibility to earn their living by piecework than to hold managerial posts. This mistrust of the workers arises largely from the fact that nominations are made casually, "because the higher officials require names". As a general rule "it is the subordinate trade union organisations and the conferences on production which propose candidates: the higher trade union organs no longer take any steps in this matter".

On the other hand the trade unions took, and continue to take, a more active part in the organisation and reorganisation of the trusts. This collaboration became especially marked when it was necessary to take steps for the "concentration" of industry. The A.C.C.T.U. and the central trade union committees were represented on the central committee of the S.E.C. appointed for the reorganisation of the trusts. They demanded more energetic action from this committee, although they were aware that the concentration of industry would eventually lead to the discharge of numerous workers, and consequently to an increase of unemployment.

During this period of organisation the trade unions further demanded greater liberty of action for their local organisations.

Trade unions also take part in the reorganisation of the economic organisations and undertakings, with a view to improving their management, but a certain time elapsed before this right was granted them. At first the A.C.C.T.U. and the central committees showed complete indifference to representation in the awaiting committees established in each trust. At present, however, these committees are functioning regularly, and the trade unions are taking part in their work. Again, they are called on to appoint representatives on the numerous special committees set up for the examination of special questions and the inspection of the more backward branches of industry. In this connection their activities showed the greatest development when it was necessary to take measures against a slump in the industrial market resulting from high prices. As a matter of fact the trade unions had to protect the wage rates of their members, and for that reason endeavoured to economise on other chapters of the budget of the enterprises. The A.C.C.T.U. and the central committees therefore led a campaign for a reduction of the general expenses of industrial and commercial organisation.

ACTIVITY OF SUBORDINATE TRADE UNION BODIES

The economic activity of the trade unions in the various undertakings is at present in a state of organisation and the objects aimed at would appear to be to keep the workers well informed about the current affairs of the undertakings and to interest them in the main features of industrial life.

These aims were explained in a joint circular issued by the A.C.C.T.U. and the S.E.C. in November 1923, when it was stated that the various assemblies of workers should be used as a channel through which to communicate information to the masses; but it would appear that this branch of trade union activity is only developed in the factory committees. On the other hand, interesting experiments in the organisation of "conferences on production" have been made in the larger undertakings. In some factories numerous meetings of delegates are called and in others special committees are formed to encourage the study of various subjects, e.g. the rational employment of labour, raw materials, fuel, reduction of general expenses, and the concentration of the productive services.

That little is still being done to interest the masses is demonstrated by a circular issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party in May 1925. According to this circular not only do the masses

remain untouched by propaganda, but many of the trade union executives themselves do not attach any importance to this work. Propaganda is badly organised, and the conferences on production called for in the A.C.C.T.U.'s circular of September 1924 are held very irregularly, and only affect a very limited circle of workers.

For these reasons the A.C.C.T.U. has been endeavouring to encourage this form of activity among the trade union organisations. At its session of May 1925 it adopted a resolution on the "economic work of the masses" which stated that it was the duty of the factory committees to organise conferences and lectures for the masses. Still more recently the same question was raised at the Fifteenth Conference of the Communist Party held in October 1926. In order to make the work of these conferences more methodical, it was then decided, after a certain amount of discussion, to attach to these conferences, by way of an experiment, supervisory committees entrusted with the preliminary examination of the questions on the agenda of the conferences.

There is a considerable amount of disagreement between the economic authorities and the trade unions, and even among the unions themselves, as regards the necessity of setting up these supervisory committees, and this fact became more apparent than ever at the Fifteenth Conference of the Communist Party. The economic authorities are categorically opposed to the formation of any new supervisory body, while certain trade union circles doubt the advisability of creating a new trade union organ, when the fundamental organ of the movement, the factory committee, enjoys such limited authority.

Such are the various forms of trade union activity in economic organisations. But it should be pointed out that as yet the whole scheme is badly defined, and this allows the various organisations too much latitude in its interpretation. This want of precision is also constantly leading to friction between the unions and the economic organisations, and even between the unionists themselves. Thus, during 1925 a number of trade unionists took matters in their own hands and led a sort of "nomad" life¹, passing their time in constant consultation with economic bodies to the detriment of their real work — the protection of the workers' interests — without the slightest improvement resulting in the economic life of the country.

The exaggerated interest shown by certain trade unionists for economic matters has gradually led a certain number of them to adopt an outlook which has been described as the "capitalist mentality". Allowing themselves to be absorbed in economic matters, they ended by

¹ *Labour Messenger*, Dec. 1925, p. 101.

completely forgetting the conditions of existence of their electors, and by sacrificing the interests of the unions for the betterment of commercial output.

Others again went to the opposite extreme. Disdaining the acquirement of all technical knowledge concerning their own special branch of industry, they insisted on the inclusion of quite unrealisable clauses in the collective agreements, and this resulted in disputes, delays in the conclusion of the agreements, and a consequent loss of prestige by the unions among the working classes.

Very soon the Communist Party was forced to open up the whole question again, and this was done at its Fourteenth Congress, held in December 1925. 'This Congress drew attention to the frequent "formation of monstrous alliances between certain trade union organisations or officials and the national economic institutions, which are resulting in the trade union representatives adopting unconditionally, and even defending, all measures and proposals emanating from the economic bodies. The trade unions are thus becoming a sort of sub-department or political section of the economic institutions, and are showing tendencies to forget their real functions of representation and protection of the economic interests of the workers. "

The Congress consequently reminded the trade unionists that in the course of their duties they must establish a line of demarcation between the respective rights and privileges of the unions and the economic organisations.

In order, however, to discourage any tendency to go to extremes, the trade unions were informed that they must nevertheless give their support to all steps taken by the economic organisations to increase the productivity of labour. But at the same time were to consider the workers interests and the feasibility of the application of all such measures.

During 1926 the trade unions did their best to carry out these instructions, and, according to a report made by Tomskey to the Fifteenth Conference of the Communist Party in October 1926, the situation had changed somewhat, although it could hardly be said to have improved. Indeed, it may be said that when the workers interests clash with the requirements of economic organisations, the trade unions either openly favour the viewpoint of the economic organisations or offer a sort of passive resistance to the workers' demands, the result in both cases being highly unsatisfactory for the workers.

CHAPTER II

THE ORGANISATION OF LABOUR

§ 1. — The Communist Period

DEMobilISATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

At the end of 1917 an immense upheaval, due to numerous causes, took place in the Russian labour market. In the first place the general demobilisation of the army and navy and the closing down of the factories engaged in war work threw hundreds of thousands of workers out of work. These difficulties were accentuated by the fact that about one million prisoners of war were employed in one way or another in the various trades and industries. Nor was any orderly plan followed in dismissing the munition workers, and the various economic organisations, including the S.E.C., were still very disorganised and quite unable to cope with the chaotic situation. By a Decree dated 19 April 1917 the Provisional Government ordered unemployment offices to be set up in all towns of over 50,000 inhabitants; but this Order was obeyed very slowly, and by November 1917 only about a score of these offices were working. As at that time the unemployed numbered roughly about one million, these offices were totally unable to deal with the situation.

A number of proposals connected with demobilisation and unemployment were made at the First Trade Union Congress, which considered that the solution of the difficulties was to be found in two directions, viz. in the economic reorganisation of the country and in the creation of labour exchanges which would be managed by the trade unions. It was thus hoped to take a census of the unemployed and to distribute superfluous labour over the branches of industry most in need of it.

These suggestions were utilised to a large extent by the Commis-

sariat of Labour in drawing up the Decree of 31 January 1918¹, which stipulated that:

Labour exchanges were to be opened by the trade unions (or to be more exact, by the inter-trade union organisations) in all districts of over 20,000 inhabitants, and, on the demand of the unions and factory committees, exchanges could be established in districts of even smaller importance.

The work of the labour exchanges was to be co-ordinated by local and regional exchanges which in turn were subordinated to a council of labour exchanges.

The local exchanges were to be managed by a committee including two delegates from the local Soviet and two from the local authorities, in addition to the representatives of the trade unions.

The funds necessary for the upkeep of the exchanges were to be furnished by the local authorities, but the State promised to grant subsidies, the amount of which was to be determined by the Commissariat of Labour. No payment was to be exacted for services rendered by the exchanges.

After the publication of the above-mentioned Decree, all private employment agencies were abolished and the registration of the labour supply and demand was reserved exclusively for the official exchanges.

The Decree thus gave the unions the sole right to find employment for the workers. Gradually, however, this monopoly developed into a semi-military system. The first indications of this change were contained in a Decree dated 3 September 1918, when the refusal by a worker to accept employment offered him, even when it was not in his own trade, became a punishable offence.

During 1918 the whole situation of the labour market changed completely. In the spring of that year the Communists reorganised the Red Army and were forced to recruit industrial workers. During the summer, when the majority of the towns were famine-stricken, large numbers of town workers fled to the country in search of food and to get their share of the land which was being distributed at that moment. The first to go were those workers who had come into the towns during the war to work in munition factories, but the exodus extended subsequently to all classes of workers, with the result that at the end of 1918 unemployment in the towns had practically disappeared.

¹ *Collection of Laws*, 1918, No. 21.

COMPULSORY LABOUR SERVICE

Towards the end of 1918 the idea of compulsory labour was gradually gaining ground, and the Labour Code which appeared at that time ¹ contained provisions for the introduction of a system of compulsory labour.

From that moment the labour exchanges, such as they had been conceived several months earlier, had no further *raison d'être*, and they were therefore transformed into institutions whose duty it was to find and engage the necessary labour required for the various branches of industry. Their title was changed into "Sections for the Census and Distribution of Labour". By a Decree dated 11 March 1919 ² the sections were placed under the jurisdiction of the Commissariat of Labour, but their management was left to the trade unions, which had the right to elect two or three members of the managements of the local sections. This Decree gave the sections the exclusive right compulsorily to engage labour for all undertakings and institutions.

The trade unions thus became the mechanism of an immense labour army. Even thus early the railway employees had been mobilised, and the air was full of rumours of the militarisation of labour. In order to make compulsory labour effective, it was decided, towards the end of 1919, to set up a Principal Committee for Compulsory Labour, with the help of the Commissariats of War and Home Affairs, i.e. military and police authorities. This Committee, and a number of subordinate organisations, were instituted by a Decree dated 29 January 1920. It should, however, be noted that no mention of the trade unions was made in the Decree, and that they were only indirectly represented in the principal Committee and its branch organisations. It included three members representing the Commissariats of Labour, War, and Home Affairs respectively. Subsequently, when the number of members on the Committee was increased, the representation of the Commissariat of Labour remained unchanged.

At the Seventh Congress of Soviets, held toward the end of 1919, Trotsky had already expounded his theory of the militarisation of labour, and at the beginning of January the first attempts were made

¹ *Ibid.*, 1918, Nos 87, 88.

² *Ibid.*, 1919, No. 20. This Decree was an amendment to the previous Decree of 29 Oct. 1918 (*Collection of Laws*, 1918, No. 80).

to form labour armies, or to be more precise, to employ certain military units in peaceful occupations. Without waiting to see the results of this truly revolutionary experiment, Trotsky's partisans expressed the belief that the only way to fill the gap made by the disappearance of skilled labour was to impose military discipline on all workers.

The mere mooted of this idea naturally aroused protests from the trade unions, which, while willing to recognise the possibility of military discipline for the peasants, were entirely opposed to its application to industry, of which they had been almost the sole organisers.

This position was met by Trotsky; who maintained, especially at the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party, that the trade unions were unable to fulfil their duties. As a proof of this he drew attention to the fact that of the 1,150,000 workers members of the unions only 850,000 were in employment. The other 300,000 were, to use military language, deserters. He argued that if compulsion were used against military deserters, it should likewise be employed against labour deserters :

The working masses cannot be allowed to remain the vagabonds they were in former Russia : it must be possible to transfer and order them about just like soldiers. This is the basic principle of the compulsory labour scheme, without which there can be no question of successfully reorganising industry. We must establish a system whereby the worker will feel himself to be a soldier of labour and will be unable freely to dispose of his services ; if he is ordered to go to a certain post, he must go or be punished as a deserter.

Trotsky's real aim, according to a statement made by Buchkarin at the same Congress, was the demolition of the trade unions ; his opponents, on the other hand, wished to give the unions entire control of the economic management of the State.

Trotsky's argument gained a partial success when it was decided to organise labour in the transport services, where an acute crisis was being felt. The Council of Labour and Defence instituted a temporary organisation, the Central Political Committee of Ways of Communication (*Glavpolitput*) which "by the influence of experienced Communists was to promote the activities of the railway employees' union . . . and to establish iron discipline. . . ." ¹. A similar committee (*Glavpolitvod*) was instituted for the Water Transport Worker' Union.

¹ *The Ninth Congress of the Communist Party*, p. 380.

Subsequently, however, as neither the *Glavpolitput* nor the *Glavpolitvod* had sufficient authority, the Central Transport Committee (*Tsektan*) was set up and managed in military fashion by Trotsky. To judge by various articles and speeches, the *Tsektan* reduced to nothing the influence of the Railwaymen's and Water Transport Workers' Committees, and it was really the *Tsektan* which decided all questions relating to wages, hours of work, distribution of labour, etc.

The result was that the requirements of the unions had to give way before those of the military, and the provisioning and transport of troops took precedence over everything else. The railway staffs had been mobilised and were subject to military laws in any case. The whole question, however, was entirely different for the industrial workers, and disturbances appear to have broken out when the compulsory labour authorities endeavoured to force the workers to accept work outside their regular trade. The Principal Committee for Compulsory Labour therefore issued, on 20 March 1920, a circular on the regulations governing compulsory labour: "These regulations were of the greatest importance, as they eased the situation of numerous workers who were previously forced to work in all sorts of jobs and who received no consideration whatever. . . ." ¹

THE UNIONS AND MILITARISATION OF LABOUR

The Third Trade Union Congress demanded the right of participation by the unions in the enforcement of the compulsory labour scheme, and this was granted them by the Decrees of 27 April on absenteeism and of 4 May on labour desertion. The provisions embodied in these Decrees were explained in a circular issued by the Principal Committee for Compulsory Labour on 28 May 1920 ².

The trade unions, through the medium of the industrial managements and the local committee on compulsory labour, must see that all persons to whom certain work has been allocated report regularly for duty: the factories' committee must report all workers who absent themselves from duty without a valid excuse; they must also endeavour to prevent the workers employed in the undertakings from absenting themselves from work except on recognised holidays, and they must bring all cases of such absenteeism to the notice of the institutions entrusted with the suppression of this evil, and if necessary to the notice of the Extraordinary

¹ *Verbatim Report of the A.C.C.T.U. for 1920*, p. 37.

² *Information on the Principal Committee for Compulsory Labour*, No. 3.

Commission (*Tcheka*) itself; in addition to these duties, the unions must also supervise the observance by the workers of all rules and regulations concerning output, labour discipline, etc.

The trade unions were also called on to participate in the work of the Medical Supervisory Committees (circular of 20 May 1920), and later their influence in matters concerning labour mobilisation largely increased. They also managed to get it admitted that trade unionists should be enrolled for general utility work only as a last resource and after all other sources of labour had been tapped, and that this enrolment should be carried out by the unions themselves.

It was for this purpose that committees on compulsory labour were set up in the undertakings and attached to the factory committees. The regulation of internal discipline had already been provided for at the end of 1919 by the creation of disciplinary tribunals, which were entirely dependent on the unions ¹. These tribunals included three members representing the management of the enterprise, the unions, and the workers employed in the undertaking concerned.

From the controversy which broke out between the unions and Trotsky's party, it might be imagined that the Communist trade unionists, in opposing the military methods of Trotsky, were desirous of re-establishing a system of voluntary labour. But this was not the case. As a matter of fact, the general discussion seems to have focussed more on the question of persons and personal tendencies than on the problem of the organisation of labour. For the trade unionist, and more especially the worker, it was probably a matter of complete indifference by which group of Communists he was to be governed, as, in any case, he was not free to take work where he wanted.

Thus it is seen that at the end of 1920 the whole trade union scheme of labour organisation was based purely and simply on coercion. This coercion was most apparent in the transport unions which were directed by Trotsky, where, as has been stated, the creation of the *Tsektran* was a partial realisation of Trotsky's ideas. As long as hostilities lasted on the Polish front, the activities of the *Tsektran* did not come in for much criticism, but in November 1920 there was a general outburst of discontent among the transport workers ². And

¹ *Collection of Laws*, 1919, No. 56.

² This is shown by the following statement by STALIN, which was printed in the *Pravda* of 19 Jan. 1921: "In a letter addressed on 30 November to the members of the Political Bureau of the Central

there is no doubt that this discontent was general among the workers. The trade unions had already begun to oppose Trotsky's party again, and so the attack on the *Tsektran* was taken as a good opportunity to revise the whole trade union policy of labour organisation. This revision was one of the subjects of the Communist discussion on the trade unions, which has already been referred to several times and which, as far as that part of the discussion was concerned, brought forth the following resolution :

The principles of industrial democracy, which have been considerably weakened by the consequences of the civil war, must be re-introduced at once in the trade union movement. The militarisation of labour, even when circumstances justify it, can only be effective if the political parties, Soviets, and trade unions explain the necessity for it to the masses.

The likelihood of a general acceptance of the system of compulsory labour which was foreshadowed in the above resolution was, as will be shown, soon to be disproved by the trade unions themselves.

§ 2. — After the New Economic Policy

THE EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES

One of the first consequences of the introduction of the NEP was the suppression of compulsory labour. By Decrees issued on 12 and 14 July 1921, the Council of People's Commissaries replaced compulsory labour for the peasants by a tax and spells of local com-

Committee of the Communist Party, Trotsky unexpectedly declared that no reforms could be made in the *Glavpolitvod* before two or three months' time. But six days later (6 December) the same Trotsky, in the same unexpected fashion, voted at a meeting of the Central Committee for the immediate suppression of the *Glavpolitput* and the *Glavpolitvod* as their structure must be reorganised on a normal democratic basis. Why this sudden change in six days ? Had the railwaymen and the inland transport workers grown up so suddenly that they no longer required the guardianship of the *Glavpolitput* and the *Glavpolitvod* ? Or had the situation completely changed ? To these questions the answer is a negative one. The only reason for the sudden change is that the inland water transport workers had asked the *Tsektran* to abolish the political *Glavki* and to make certain changes in Trotsky's staff, which, fearing a general débâcle and desiring to retain what power they could, had to make a number of partial concessions, which have, moreover, satisfied nobody."

pulsory duty, while the Decree of 3 November 1921 freed the workers and employees in State undertakings and institutions from all compulsory work, except in cases of national calamities. This evolution was of course inevitable the moment that authorisation was given to open private undertakings, and that the State no longer controlled the labour market by means of a single central institution.

It would seem that the Commissariat of Labour, in its endeavours to find labour for the State undertakings, did not immediately renounce all methods of compulsion in recruitment. But in this it met with strong opposition from the trade unions, which considered that in view of the new conditions created by the NEP it was inadmissible that labour should be subjected to compulsion of any sort. The unions managed to persuade the Commissariat to give way on this point, and at the Fifth Trade Union Congress the Commissary of Labour declared that circumstances rendered undesirable all recourse to coercion in the labour market.

The abolition of compulsory labour was definitely recognised as one of the principles of labour organisation in the Soviet Republic by the Labour Code of 1922, which sanctioned it only in very exceptional circumstances. Shortly afterwards, moreover, the extension of unemployment dispensed with any further need for compulsory labour. It was then found necessary to set up institutions to serve as an intermediary between employers and employed, and it was decided to replace the Sections for the Census and Distribution of Labour by labour exchanges organised by the State.

No difficulties arose concerning the composition of these exchanges, which, it was generally recognised, had to be of a joint character. A joint circular issued on 13 August by the S.E.C., the Central Council of Trade Unions, and the Commissariats of Labour and Transport stated:

As it is in the interests of both the economic organisations and the trade unions that the supply and demand for labour should be co-ordinated, and that the labour market should be well organised, it is essential that both parties take their share in the work of organisation and regulation. This possibility is given them, even in the labour exchanges, by the constitution of joint labour exchange committees, in which the representatives of the Commissariats of Labour, the economic organisations, and the unions meet in equal numbers and on an equal footing.

As it turned out, the unions were destined to play no mean part in the technical organisation of the exchanges. Trade sections were

ordered to be set up in the exchanges when the number of unemployed in any one trade exceeded 500, when the trade classification of the unemployed was difficult to establish, or when an undertaking in search of labour was of special importance for the national economy or for the State. The necessary steps to organise these sections were generally taken by the Labour Exchange Committee in conjunction with the trade unions concerned, or by order of the Commissariat of Labour.

If, however, the organisation and the constitution of the exchanges encountered no special difficulties, their activities were, from the beginning of 1923, subjected to much criticism. It was stated that their methods of engaging workers were exceedingly arbitrary, and that bad organisation and the large number of applicants on their registers were preventing really skilled workers from finding employment. The economic organisations were endeavouring more and more to do without their services, and in this they were only meeting the desires of the workers, who preferred direct engagement to the great loss of time resulting from the obligation imposed upon them to seek employment through the exchanges.

At the end of 1922 the *Gosplan* advocated the suppression of the exchanges' sole right to place workers in employment. The trade unions protested, and the Commissariat of Labour published, in August 1923, a Decree meant to reconcile the two points of view. One of the most important features of this Decree was the decision no longer to find employment for persons according to the principles of trade union policy and public assistance; instead of listing applicants and giving priority to trade unionists, it was decided that in future applicants would be allocated work according to their merits, and that preference would be given only to those workers who best fulfilled the requirements of the employer.

Trade union membership and priority of registration would be considered only in the following cases:

- (a) When all applicants were trade unionists, the candidate longest on the registers of the exchange would be chosen, no matter to what union he was affiliated;
- (b) When applicants were trade unionists and non-unionists, the former, all other things being equal, would be given preference.

Moreover, trade union circles themselves gradually became antagonistic to the monopoly of the exchanges; quick to realise that these

institutions were powerless to cope with the unemployment crisis, they finally adopted the point of view that only a voluntary system of engaging workers was compatible with the new conditions and the habit of direct engagement which the workers were adopting in ever-increasing numbers.

A startling innovation, which gave great satisfaction to trade union and industrial circles, but was opposed by the Commissariat of Labour, was proposed by the Leningrad unions in 1924. A special committee, chosen by the Inter-Trade Union Council, decided that in future only unemployed belonging to certain trades (those greatest in demand) should be allowed to register with the Leningrad exchange. Other "persons seeking employment", i.e. labourers, unskilled workers, and skilled intellectual workers, were to be struck off the registers. In addition, it was proposed to allow the nationalised industrial undertakings to engage workers without application to the labour exchanges, provided that at a later date they registered all workers thus engaged.

This method of engaging workers was legalised by an Order issued by the Commissariat of Labour on 21 August 1924, when it was definitely decided to abolish the labour exchanges and organise voluntary employment offices. The provisions contained in this Order were incorporated in the Labour Code by Decree dated 2 January 1925.

Such was the evolution of trade union policy as far as finding employment for the workers was concerned.

MEASURES AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

During the course of their efforts to combat unemployment in Russia, the trade unions managed to get the Government to adopt a number of important legislative measures.

As regards unemployment relief, they obtained certain advantages for skilled workers, whose benefits were fixed at 50 per cent. of the minimum budget instead of the 33 per cent. granted to unskilled workers. The A.C.C.T.U. also did their best to get preference for skilled workers in the payment of relief.

But as regards the organisation of public works and artels for the unemployed, trade union policy was very undecided. At one period they ordered the closing of the artels on the grounds that these bodies were adopting a commercial policy, and at another they organised

artels, which, however, got into debt and had finally to close down. In 1925 the situation became even more complicated, as a result of the fact that the unemployed who were given work by this means were struck off the trade union registers.

Furthermore, the trade unions organised unemployment funds, and supported them with grants from trade union funds and voluntary subscriptions from their members. In certain unions it was even proposed to compel members to make regular subscriptions to the funds ¹. Unemployment benefits vary largely in the different unions, running from several kopecks to 12 roubles a month ².

At the beginning of the unemployment crisis the trade unions did their utmost to cut down overtime hours, but in this direction their efforts did not meet with much success, as the proportion of overtime hours to the total number of hours worked only decreased from 3.5 per cent. in 1922 to 3.3 per cent. in 1923. Subsequently, when word went round to increase output at all costs, further attempts in this connection were abandoned.

All the measures described above were, however, merely a drop in the ocean compared with the ever-increasing volume of unemployment. The following figures, which, it should be remembered, concern only the unemployed registered with the exchanges, and must therefore be taken as extremely low ³, show the fluctuations in the number of the unemployed during the years 1923 to 1926 ⁴:

Date	Number of unemployed	Date	Number of unemployed
January 1922	70,000	July 1924	1,344,000
January 1923	641,000	January 1925	901,600
July 1923	1,050,000	July 1925	1,100,000
January 1924	1,240,000	May 1926	1,091,000

¹ This has been formally prohibited by the A.C.C.T.U.

² A number of unions were unnecessarily careful of their expenditure for unemployment relief, with the result that they distributed only one-quarter of their unemployment fund. The A.C.C.T.U. had to insist that larger distributions of funds be made.

³ In addition to the unemployed registered with the exchanges, generally about a million in number, there were still a large number of others. The figures for May 1925 show that there were 1,182,500 trade unionists out of work. When the seasonal workers remaining in the towns after the termination of their agreement and the peasants who did not register with the exchanges are included, there must have been close on two million workless.

⁴ *Labour Questions*, 1925, No. 10, p. 19, and *Trood*, 10 June 1926.

Thus it is seen that despite all measures taken, unemployment continued to increase until July 1924. From that date a decrease is apparent, but this would appear to have been due to restrictions imposed on the registration of non-proletarian elements, in accordance with the new trade union policy inaugurated about that time. From 1925 to May 1926 the decrease in unemployment would seem to have been less fictitious. At that moment the promise of a good harvest led the authorities to make a great expansion in industry, with the result that hundreds of thousands of manual and non-manual workers found work. This, however, led to a new difficulty, as of the remaining unemployed the large majority was composed of labourers and inexperienced workers. The unemployment question was thus further complicated by the necessity of training a large body of skilled workers. So long as the younger workers and the unemployed did not receive technical training, the country could be developed industrially only at the expense of output, as the large number of unskilled workers has a most detrimental effect on the cost price of industrial products.

It is a certainty that unemployment is not decreasing. While, on the one hand, the working population is rapidly increasing, it appears most unlikely, on the other, that industry, unless it receives a large amount of fresh capital, can develop in the same proportions as in preceding years. The country districts are over-populated, and the towns receive the surplus population, attracted not only by the desire to earn their living, but also by the advantages of town life. This is especially so in the case of the younger elements of the wealthier peasant families.

The trade unions now find themselves face to face with this new difficulty, before which they seem powerless. Their chief aim at present seems to be to prevent unemployment from affecting the trade unionist workers of long experience. This is leading them to extend the categories of unemployed benefiting from unemployment insurance, but here again, as will be seen later, they are impeded by the financial difficulties by which the official insurance scheme itself is surrounded.

CHAPTER III

WAGES POLICY

§ 1. — During the Communist Period

THE REGULATION OF WAGE RATES BY THE TRADE UNIONS

In 1917, wages and conditions of labour were established by mutual consent of the workers (through the factory committees and trade unions) and employers by collective agreements. After the revolution, and simultaneously with the nationalisation of industry, collective agreements disappeared, and were replaced by wage tariffs drawn up by the trade unions and approved by the Commissariat of Labour. This system meant that the trade unions were to play an important part in State affairs, as in practice all workers were employees of the State itself.

From this there resulted the tendency to standardise wages first in each of the various branches of production in the first place, and later for the whole of the workers. Still later the idea of wage barometers was introduced, and these barometers were fixed for the various districts in accordance with index numbers of the cost of living.

Thus it is seen that in 1918 the trade union wage policy was based on two broad principles, namely, the unilateral regulation of tariffs by the workers' organisations and the standardisation of these tariffs as far as possible in accordance with the cost of living.

These were, however, general principles, the application of which demanded, in the existing circumstances, very strict and minute supervision, and for this reason it was necessary to entrust the A.C.C.T.U. with the administration and supervision of the wages question as a whole. The Second Trade Union Congress, which drew up a general scheme concerning wage tariffs, therefore demanded that

these powers be given to the A.C.C.T.U. Subsequently, the Third Congress of Labour Sections adopted a resolution calling for the formation, in the Commissariat of Labour and its local sections and in the Inter-Trade Union Council, of tariff sections, the members of which should be chosen by the Central Council or by the local trade union councils. The local wage tariff sections were to take their instructions from the Wages Section of the Commissariat of Labour, in this way the trade union obtained complete control of the wages policy.

In January 1919 a section for establishing tariffs and classifying wages was attached to the A.C.C.T.U., and this new section played a very important part in the administration of the wages policy throughout the entire Communist period. This body it was which drew up a table classifying the various trades employed in the different branches of production, and it was also entrusted with the revision of tariffs submitted to it by the various unions. It further fixed the basic wage payable in kind, overtime rates of pay and output bonuses.

At this period, therefore, the wages policy was highly centralised. Nevertheless, an Order of 17 June 1920 (Article 68) entitled the unions to raise the wage tariffs in exceptional cases. This step was very necessary, as, in practice, the depreciation of the rouble and insufficiency of wages and of extra wage payments was so great that any scheme for the fixing of wages became utterly impossible. The course of events soon compelled the Central Council of Trade Unions to take control, not only of the theoretical establishment of wage tariffs, but also of the whole system of payment.

At this period the payment of wages depended on several institutions. Wages and cash were supplied by the Commissariat of Finance, and rations by the Commissariat of Supplies, while the managements of industrial undertakings distributed a part of their output among the workers. In order to ensure the regular payment of wages in cash and in kind, the A.C.C.T.U. had to take steps to subordinate the activities of the services of supplies and distribution to the general wages policy¹, and this resulted in a sharp conflict between the various parties concerned. The A.C.C.T.U. was even forced to oppose certain legislative acts of the Council of People's Commissaries and the Council of Labour and Defence, which claimed the right to extend the attributions of certain unions. Finally, the Council had to take measures

¹ *Verbatim Report of the A.C.C.T.U. for 1920-1921.*

to co-ordinate its supervision with that of the newly created Administration of Workers and Peasants Inspection.

All these measures added importance to the part played by the Central Council of Trade Unions in the remuneration of Labour, and a complicated administrative machinery was set up to deal with the various questions. The Tariff Section of the Council, which, previous to the Third Trade Union Congress of 1920, numbered 14 officials, included 65 at the beginning of 1921. In addition, tariff sections were set up in all the departmental inter-trade union councils and in the district inter-trade union offices. In the undertakings themselves, wage estimate committees were formed, under the management of the local union, and entrusted with the enforcement of instructions received from the central wage authorities. In like manner, trade union sections for the regulation of wages directed the activities of the offices for the regulation of wages set up in the economic organisations. Finally, and this is an important point, the wages sections attached to the local organs of the Commissariat of Labour amalgamated in nearly every case with the trade union sections.

THE PROVISIONING OF THE WORKING CLASSES

Just as, from an administrative point of view, the unions had acquired complete control of the wages policy, so they were not long in obtaining for themselves an important place in the application of this policy. This they were able to do, largely on account of the introduction of payments of wages in kind, which gradually gave them the position of State agents for the provisioning of the working classes. This new task necessitated the creation of two new organisations named respectively the *Prozodezhda* (working clothes) and the *Voënproudbureau* (supplies), about which it is necessary to say a few words.

Towards the end of 1919, one of the forms of payment of wages adopted was the distribution of working clothes. This was found to be necessary because the workers were quite unable, on account of their low wages and the almost complete absence of manufactured goods, to obtain new clothes as they required them.

It was therefore decided to entrust the A.C.C.T.U. with the distribution of the necessary clothes, and a special department, the *Prozodezhda*, was created for this purpose. This body classified the workers according to their needs and determined the quantity of clothes to be distributed in each group. Demands for clothes by the

workers of the various undertakings had to be made through their factory committees. These demands were then forwarded to the respective industrial departments of the S.E.C., which periodically established a sort of common budget of the articles required. This budget was subsequently forwarded to the *Prozodezhda*, which, in accordance with the programme drawn up by the Committee of Utilisation, issued orders to the *Centrotextile* and the Commissariat of Supplies, requesting these bodies to satisfy the requirements of the various industrial departments. The subsequent distribution of special clothing in the factories and workshops was supervised by the central committee of the unions concerned ¹.

As regards the provisioning of the workers, the rôle of the unions was to organise workers' detachments for the collection of supplies. A Decree of 6 August 1918 allowed the larger industrial federations (including the railwaymen) and the Federation of Factory Committees to raise detachments, which were despatched into the agricultural districts to make the necessary requisition of grain at fixed prices. Further, in order to ensure the success of these operations, the trade union organisations were ordered to raise detachments of harvesters.

Another Decree, issued on 12 December 1918, authorised the trade unions to purchase and transport potatoes, milk and other products, on receiving permission to do so from the local Soviet.

These detachments were directed in their work by a central organisation, the *Voënproudbureau*, which was formed by the A.C.C.T.U. It was the duty of this body to mobilise the workers, allocate them to the various supply organisations, form detachments, and organise workers' inspection in this and the corresponding domains ².

Between 1 September 1918 and 1 April 1920 the Bureau formed detachments including 44,119 men, and from April 1920 to April 1921 1,019 detachments including 30,570 men. The supervision of these detachments was carried out by departmental institutions composed of three members, of whom one — the president — was a representative of the Central Bureau. At the end of the year a number of subordinate control bodies existed in certain districts.

This organisation occupied 5,403 militant trade unionists between 1918 and 1921, while the central bureau was composed of 152 officials. Besides making the requisitions ordered, the detachment had to supply

¹ Instruction published in *Economicheskaja Zhizn*, No. 201, 1919.

² *Verbatim Report of the Second Trade Union Congress.*

controllers to supervise points of concentration, mills, etc. In order to give the detachments an interest in their work, the A.C.C.T.U. published, on 4 September 1920, an Order which granted bonuses in kind to those enterprises the detachments of which gave the greatest satisfaction. These bonuses were as much as $2\frac{1}{2}$ poods of grain per head.

This inspectorate was reinforced by a transport inspectorate, whose duty it was to regulate railway operations, and which included 168 inspectors at the end of 1922 ¹.

These two examples of the participation of the trade unions in the provisioning of the population show what proportions the part played by the unions in the general wages policy of the Government had assumed during the years 1918-1921. This period may truly be named "the wage dictatorship of the A.C.C.T.U." ².

Nevertheless, this period did not bring any great prosperity to the workers. While, on the one hand, wages were almost entirely paid in kind, on the other, their level had fallen very considerably. In this connection the following figures are enlightening ³:

AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGE OF AN INDUSTRIAL WORKER

(In pre-war roubles)

Year	In cash	In kind	Total
1913	22	—	22
1917	22.1	1.10	22.39
1918	4.73	4.26	8.99
1919	1.40	5.37	6.77
1920	0.49	6.63	7.12
1921	0.96	5.99	6.95

It is seen that in 1920, 93.1 per cent of wages were paid in kind, and the real value of wages had diminished to one-third of pre-war figures.

¹ *Verbatim Reports of the A.C.C.T.U. for 1920-1921*

² *Economicheskaya Zhizn*, 2 July 1922.

³ STRUMILIN: *Wages and Output in Russian Industry during 1913-1922*. Moscow, 1913.

§ 2. — After the New Economic Policy.

WAGES BASED ON OUTPUT

The introduction of the new economic policy was bound to lead to a considerable change in the wages policy. In the first place, the unions lost the exclusive competence which they had enjoyed until then, and instead of being the sole authorities for the establishment of wage rates, they became mere parties to agreements of which the main object was to fix conditions for the remuneration of labour. The transition period of 1921 was remarkable for the number of attempts made to change the system of the establishment and payment of wages. The Fourth Trade Union Congress had already recognised, in principle, the advantages of the system of collective agreements; but it considered that, for political and economic reasons, it was necessary to maintain for the time being the fundamental principles of the old system, as the situation created by the NEP did not appear to be very clearly defined. From May 1921 the workers were allowed to increase their earnings by augmenting their output, and piecework was introduced both for individual workers and groups of workers. In addition to cash bonuses, the workers received bonuses in kind, which were generally supplied from the articles manufactured by the undertaking concerned. The main object of these bonuses was to give the workers an interest in their work and to increase the real value of wages earned. Two Decrees issued by the Council of People's Commissaries ¹ extended the authority of the A.C.C.T.U. to the application of this scheme, which, between 15 May and 30 August 1921, was introduced in a large number of factories. It was about this time that an experiment was made in "collective supply," the object of which was to endow the various undertakings with a wages fund. The essential features of this scheme are described below ².

A special wages fund was created by the State to guarantee the payment of wages in large-scale industry. This fund was fed by levies made on the proceeds of the Government's tax in kind, and by goods furnished by the various undertakings taking part in the scheme. These undertakings received the amount of wages (in cash and in kind) due to them one month in advance.

Before being allowed to take part in the scheme, undertakings had to reduce their staff by at least 50 per cent., and it was understood

¹ 7 April 1921 and 17 May 1921 (*Collection of Laws*, Nos. 27 and 45).

² Decree of 18 July 1921 (*Collection of Laws*, 1921, No. 55).

that if an undertaking managed to make further reductions of staff without any decrease in output, no reduction would be made in the wages fund allotted to it.

All output bonuses, wages for piecework and increases for over-time work were to be paid from the wages fund.

In point of fact, the scheme of collective supply was the first step towards the abolition of "public assistance," which until then, had been the base of the whole wages policy. The maintenance of the worker was considered anew as his due for work performed, and the principle of wages was thus re-established. What the worker received (food, cash, and objects of prime necessity) was his wages, and apart from that he was entitled to nothing.

Another experiment made about this time was the "budgetary scheme by agreement", whereby the State instituted for each undertaking an "annual budgetary fund", which included the quantity of products and the amount in cash required for the payment of the wages of all workers and employees in the undertaking for the period of one year. This fund was constituted in accordance with pre-war output and the minimum workers' budget.

These various experiments only gave good results when they were first introduced, and many abuses rapidly arose. Although the wages fund created by the State was very limited, all undertakings desired to take part in the scheme, and at the end of 1921 and the beginning of 1922, the number of persons provided for by the State rose from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions, and this resulted in a decrease in the individual ration granted. Moreover, very little account was taken of the individual's output. During this period of transition the unions had to take steps to prevent factory workers from selling at ridiculous prices the goods received as part of their wages, as this was having a most detrimental result on the market prices. In many cases the workers considered the factory and its output to belong to them, and were no longer content with a simple bonus for output. It should also be recognised that manufactured products were the only means of exchange through which food products could be obtained. In order to meet this situation, the unions were forced to re-form workers' co-operative societies and entrust them with the sale of industrial products, and to prohibit the issue to the workers of all goods beyond their personal requirements¹.

¹ Instructions issued to local trade union executives, *Labour Messenger*, 1921, Nos. 7 and 8, p. 34.

THE MINIMUM LEGAL WAGE

By the beginning of 1922 it had become evident that all the various experiments made to improve the situation were to no purpose, and that the only solution was to adapt things to the results which naturally followed the introduction of the NEP. This was the problem with which the A.C.C.T.U. found itself faced in February 1922.

In the resolutions which it adopted on the subject, the Central Committee began by repudiating all previous wage policies. It spontaneously renounced all claims to the establishment of rigid wages and the dictatorship which had been conferred on it during the Communist period. It condemned all the various experiments described above, although it retained certain fundamental features of these schemes.

This really meant complete abandonment of the plan for the establishment of fixed wages for all workers in Russia, and in future the only stable thing about wages was the minimum scale, which was guaranteed by the wage funds. The A.C.C.T.U. strongly recommended the conclusion of collective agreements to determine the rates of wages in each undertaking in accordance with local conditions, further advocating that all wages should be paid in cash as far as possible.

Being also convinced of the necessity of simplifying the administrative regulation of wages, the Council deemed it necessary to abolish numerous institutions (central and local departments of the Commissariat of Labour) and to entrust their duties to a single institution, the Supreme Wage Tariff Council.

This recommendation was adopted, and a special committee appointed to supervise the activities of the Central Wage Fund Committee decided to transform this latter body into the Supreme Wage Tariff Council, this decision being ratified by a Decree issued by the Council of People's Commissaries on 1 June 1922.

The new institution was attached to the Council of Labour and Defence, and its composition was as follows: one representative from each of the Commissariats of Labour, Supplies, Finance, and Transport, and from S.E.C. and two representatives from the A.C.C.T.U.

All members had to meet with the approval of the Council of Labour and Defence, while the chairman was a representative of the Commissariat of Labour ¹.

¹ Decree of 8 June 1922 (*Collection of Decrees*, 1922, No. 39).

To sum up, it may be said that the two main objects of the trade union wages policy at this period were : (1) to obtain the best possible living conditions for the workers, and (2) to increase the productivity of labour by raising wages as far as this was compatible with the financial and economic possibilities of industry. To accomplish this it was necessary to co-ordinate production and labour, and this co-ordination was accomplished by means of collective agreements. As for other matters, the trade unionists retained the right to oppose all measures of a too stringent character adopted by the economic organisations. They expressed their readiness to take part in all discussions on wages, and not to make extortionate demands, but they insisted on being kept well-informed regarding the actual economic situation. " We must ", they said, " increase our collaboration in the work of the State Departments in order to have a knowledge of all questions concerning production, the economic position of industry, the financial situation, the material assets of industry, the plan of supplies, etc. "

ESTABLISHMENT OF WAGES BY COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

About this period the trade unions launched an active campaign in favour of the conclusion of collective agreements, with the result that the system of regulation wages by such agreements speedily became general.

Simultaneously with the increase in the number of collective agreements, wages rose rapidly, and soon soared high above the minimum rates laid down by the State. This increase began in private undertakings and those leased to private individuals, but spread to the nationalised and private undertakings in small-scale industry which, being in close touch with markets, were able to dispose of their goods easily and thus increase their working capital.

The nationalised large-scale industrial concerns, however, which depended entirely on Government orders and subsidies, suffered severely from shortness of working capital as they were not in touch with the open markets ; they consequently experienced great difficulties in increasing their wage rates.

In view of this, the authorities, and more particularly the S.E.C., decided to put a stop to the soaring of wages by effective intervention at the renewal of collective agreements.

These steps caused a certain amount of friction between the Government and the trade unions, and the A.C.C.T.U., at its session of December 1922, protested against the establishment of a maximum wage in the collective agreements. But in this matter the trade unions were not allowed to have their own way ; a Decree issued on 9 November 1922 by the Council of People's Commissaries, fixed maximum wage rates for State undertakings and institutions.

The opposition felt in Government and economic circles towards trade union interference gradually developed, and the unions began to be accused of an entire absence of a wages policy, and of grasping all they could without paying the slightest attention to the actual economic situation. The economic departments called for a more precise regulation of wages, especially in those undertakings which depended financially on the State. They were especially desirous that a certain amount of co-operation should be established between the undertakings working at a profit and the others, and that the profits made by a given concern should not be used exclusively to increase the wages of the workers employed there, but should be distributed equally over all the others.

The line of argument taken by the unions was that if wages had increased, output had increased still more, and that it was absurd to endeavour to solve the difficulties in which industry found itself at the expense of the workers, instead of taking steps to improve technical organisation and plant, and to reduce general expenses, etc.

Nor can it be said that the arguments advanced on both sides were without foundation. That industrial organisation was defective was an undoubted fact, and that it could be made more rational had been shown by the dismissal of several hundreds of thousands of workers employed on the railways. On the other hand, the fact that the unions had little or no inclination to oppose the somewhat natural claims of their members is shown by a resolution adopted in December by the Central Council of Trade Unions, which reminded the local unions that " a sound wages policy necessitated careful consideration of economic conditions ".

The wages discussion between the unions and the economic authorities lasted until the middle of 1923. It is obvious, however, that the A.C.C.T.U., with its wider view of the economic situation, understood much earlier than the local unions the necessity of putting a stop to the continual rise in wages. As early as April 1923, the Council had pointed out the necessity of stabilising wages,

the average of which had increased from 8.50 real roubles per month at the end of 1922 to 12.3 real roubles per month in March 1923.

The A.C.C.T.U. was convinced that some drastic step in this direction was necessary, as increased cost of labour was undoubtedly increasing the cost of production, so that the increase in wages was a very illusory one. Moreover, the industrial market was threatened by a severe slump. The purchasing power of the peasants had been reduced so far that, although in need of almost everything, they were unable to buy anything. The unions thus found themselves face to face, not only with the economic organisations, but also with the natural economic law of supply and demand. They compromised by agreeing to make no further demands for increased wages, provided they were allowed to retain the rates they had acquired. This compromise formed the subject of a resolution adopted by the Central Council of Trade Unions in September 1923, and of which the main features are summarised below.

The wages policy was to be based on the economic situation of the country. The characteristics of the situation at that moment were : (1) A State budget which showed a deficit ; (2) slow development of state industry due to lack of working capital ; (3) a great difference between the relative prices of industrial and agricultural products which was preventing the peasants from purchasing, and this leading to a critical situation in the industrial market. In these circumstances wages could be increased only if the deficit in the industrial budget decreased, if productivity of labour increased, and if the cost of production diminished. But it was to be understood that even these conditions were fulfilled, an increase in wages could not be made if it was to result in raising the prices of manufactured goods.

The trade unions were to take steps to maintain the rates in force in small-scale industry, and to raise wages in the less favoured branches of industry, namely, large-scale industry, the transport services, and the ways of communication.

EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH REGULAR PAYMENT OF WAGES

The controversy between the economic organisations and the trade unions on the subject of wages now entered on a new phase. Up to this point the arguments had centred on the regulation of

wages by collective agreements. In these discussions the economic organisations had almost entrenched themselves behind the State, alleging that they had been told "not to expect any supplementary credits, and that this fact must be taken as the point of departure in all consideration of the possibility of acceding to the demands of the trade unions concerning collective agreements".

Faced with these objections on the part of the economic organisations, the trade unions decided to adopt a new attitude. "That you do not wish to make promises which you are not absolutely sure of being able to fulfil", they said, "we quite understand; but please fulfil the promises you have already made."

And indeed, for some time back, in spite of collective agreements and guaranteed wage funds, the economic organisations had been very much behind in the payment of wages. One undertaking would be a fortnight late, another a month, and a third six weeks in arrear; and meantime the rouble continued to fall. This depreciation would have been of little importance had wages still been paid in kind; but the trade unions had been demanding, since 1922, the payment of wages in cash. The resolution adopted on this matter read as follows :

Considering that mixed wages (in cash and in kind) do not meet the requirements of the present economic situation, and that it is desirable to avoid all difficulties and confusion arising from the fluctuations in the purchasing power of the rouble, the Congress considers that the wages policy should tend towards a system of payment in cash ¹.

This proposal was approved by the Government which, by Decrees issued on 8 and 10 September 1922, reduced the system of State supplies to the strict minimum, keeping only a sufficient stock of food to meet any unforeseen eventuality. By the middle of 1922, by far the greater part of wages was paid in cash, and whereas in January 1922, cash payments represented only 22.5 per cent. of the actual wages, by September 1922 this figure had risen to 33.3 per cent., and finally increased in June 1923, to an average of 84.1 per cent., while in certain industries the entire wage was paid in cash.

The fact that wages were paid in cash rendered them far more liable to be affected by the fluctuation of the rouble, and delays in

¹ *Verbatim Report of the Fifth Congress*, p. 528.

payment counterbalanced the benefit which the workers ought to have received from the increased rates. Thus it was that in September 1923 the wages paid to the workers represented not more than 80 to 90 per cent. of the sum actually earned.

To remedy this it was necessary to take steps to guarantee the regular payment of wages when they were due. The resolution of the Central Committee mentioned above advised the unions " to give the greatest attention to this evil, which was reducing the earnings of the workers and causing great discontent ". The unions were very anxious to find means to avoid these losses, and finally made an arrangement with the economic organisations whereby the dates for payment of wages were fixed and the payment guaranteed in Chervonetz roubles.

Hardly, however, had this agreement been reached when new difficulties arose between the unions and the economic organisations. The latter desired that wages should not only be paid, but also fixed, in Chervonetz roubles, while the unions who feared a fall in the value of the Chervonetz wanted to maintain the establishment of wage rates in real (pre-war) roubles.

In the end, a decision in favour of the unions was taken at the Congress of Soviets held at the end of January 1924.

But this was only a mere stage in the evolution that was taking place. The Government was at that period preparing a way for a return to the gold standard. In order to launch this scheme it was necessary that everyone should be ready to make personal sacrifices and that the workers should agree to a cessation in the rise of wages, and even to a decrease in wages. The unions were asked to promote these ideas among the workers.

The unions expressed their willingness to undertake this work, but insisted on the workers' right to discuss the coefficients proposed by the Government for the conversion of real roubles into Chervonetz roubles. It is quite probable that, if the unions had had their own way at this period, they would have endeavoured to fix the coefficient at the highest possible figure; but the Central Trade Union Council, better informed of the needs of the economic situation and the Government's plans, warned them against the danger of any such action by a circular dated 29 February 1924.

By April the Government and the trade unions had come to an agreement concerning a revision of the wages policy. The Central Trade Union Council and the S.E.C. issued a joint circular calling

on the workers to make further sacrifices in order that the Government might carry its currency reform scheme to a successful issue. As a matter of fact, these sacrifices were of very temporary duration, and the average reduction of wages in this connection did not exceed 3 per cent.

STEPS TO RAISE THE PRODUCTIVITY OF LABOUR

From the beginning of 1924 a new subject of dispute arose between the unions and the economic organisations.

It has been seen that one of the complaints made against the unions by the economic authorities was that the unions did not pay sufficient attention to economic facts when drafting collective agreements. The unions had always energetically repudiated this accusation and had maintained that every increase in wages was accompanied by a relatively greater increase in the productivity of labour.

During 1924 the trade union leaders were forced to recognise that the facts did not at all correspond with their statements, but they still continued to deny that the situation was as serious as painted by the economic authorities. Whereas the latter estimated the productivity of labour at one-third of the pre-war figure, the trade unions affirmed, on the strength of various enquiries made, that it was as high as two thirds. The only point of agreement was that there had been a decrease in comparison with pre-war days.

Among the main causes of the decrease may be included: (a) the incomplete use made of the eight-hour day, (b) the lack of organisation and discipline in the undertakings, and (c) the defective condition of industrial plant.

According to *Trood*, the official organ of the trade unions, the workers in many undertakings paid no attention to the regulations concerning the eight-hour day. Often seven hours and sometimes only six were worked, and a case has been known where only two hours a day were worked. In Moscow the productive utilisation of the working day was no higher than 52.9 per cent. in the metal industry and from 30 to 40 per cent. in the textile trades. The remainder of the day was passed in unproductive work or in complete idleness.

In addition to this, there was a very high percentage of absence from work on account of sickness, sick leave being granted with practically no supervision on the part of the insurance funds. The productivity of labour suffered accordingly, and insurance funds were

weighed down with excessive expenditure, which in the long run fell entirely on the undertakings themselves.

Again, the directors of nationalised industry complained bitterly of the lack of discipline among the workers and the opposition met with from the trade unions. The unions retorted by drawing attention to the detrimental influence exercised by the bad organisation of labour, the defective state and insufficiency of industrial plant (which in many undertakings had not been renewed since the war), and the inferior quality of the raw materials used. In certain undertakings the machinery was working without material during a great part of the day. In many cases, although it was obvious during the first stage of manufacture that the product was of very bad quality, even to the extent of being useless, it was not rejected until it had passed through all the various stages of manufacture.

The various aspects of this question were examined by numerous conferences, held between the unions, the S.E.C., the directors of nationalised industry, etc., and in spite of great divergences of opinion on other points all were agreed that piecework rates should be substituted for time rates where it was possible.

Among the numerous resolutions aiming at an increase in labour productivity, the most important is that voted on 15 August 1924 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party. The clauses which directly concerned the workers, and consequently the trade unions, were as follows :

- (a) To increase the level of production wherever it is very low.
- (b) Unrestrictedly to apply piecework rates, provided that the wage tariffs are periodically revised as improvements in plant are introduced.
- (c) To re-establish normal proportions between the number of workers and employees engaged in the undertakings.

A number of resolutions concerning wages and economic questions were adopted by the A.C.C.T.U. in September 1924 and at the sixth Trade Union Congress held in the following November. For the main part, these resolutions pointed out that, in view of the respective standards of wages and output, any further increase in the wages depended entirely on improved output, and that this improvement could only be achieved by a long period of economy which would enable the Government to accumulate the resources necessary for the recapitalisation of industry.

The measures proposed by the sixth Congress were merely a

repetition of those suggested by the Communist Party, and may be described briefly as the introduction of piece rates and the improvement of factory discipline.

In order to propagate these ideas among the workers, and to convince them of the necessity of patience, as "there was no question of organising a temporary 'shock' campaign, but of encouraging a serious continuous effort extending over several years", the unions decided to organise a long series of workers' conferences on problems of production.

This scheme was carried out with the greatest energy, and from July 1924 to July 1925 the productive capacity of the workers was submitted to pressure, which generally increased the individual worker's output without increasing wages in similar proportions. The following table illustrates the fluctuations in individual output and wages since 1922 :

WAGES AND INDIVIDUAL OUTPUT FROM 1913 TO 1924

(In Pre-War Roubles)

Year	Workers' annual output		Workers' annual wage	
	Roubles	Index numbers	Roubles	Index numbers
1913	2,163	100	292	100
1914	2,134	98.6	283	96.9
1915	2,419	111.3	274	93.6
1916	2,335	107.9	268	91.8
1917	1,436	66.4	214	73.1
1918	781	36.1	126	43.3
1919	711	32.9	102	34.9
1920-1921	663	30.6	100	33.3
1921-1922	1,201	55.5	123	41.0
1922-1923	1,342	62.3	162	54.0
1923-1924	1,589	73.5	210	70.0

¹ GUKHMANN, *The Productivity of Labour and Wages*. Moscow, 1925.

From this table it can be seen that wages practically doubled since 1919, while productivity of labour increased two and a-half times. In 1923-1924 the workers' individual output had reached 73.5 per cent. and wages 70 per cent. of the pre-war level.

In order to give a more exact idea of the fluctuations of wages

and individual output during the last three years, the following figures are reproduced ¹:

DAILY WAGES AND INDIVIDUAL OUTPUT (IN PRE-WAR ROUBLES)
FOR THE YEARS 1923-1926

Year	Daily wages		Individual daily output	
	In kopeks	Index number	In roubles	Index number
1922-1923				
1st quarter	49.7	100	3.29	100
2nd "	65.4	132	3.48	106
3rd "	68.9	139	3.52	109
4th "	78.7	158	3.61	110
Average	65.7	100	3.47	100
1923-1924				
1st quarter	83.3	100	4.95	100
2nd "	87.6	105	5.79	105
3rd "	89.5	107	6.03	114
4th "	97.4	116	5.81	117
Average	89.4	136	4.06	116
1924-1925				
1st quarter	102.8	100	4.95	100
2nd "	103.0	100	5.79	116
3rd "	105.7	103	6.03	121
4th "	128.4	125	5.81	151
Average	110.0	165	5.65	162
1925-1926				
1st quarter	126.2	100	5.91	100
2nd "	123.7	98	6.28	106
3rd "	121.3	96	6.52	110
4th "	127.7	101	6.57	111
Average	124.8	189	6.32	182

From this table it is evident that up to 1924 the rise in wages was more rapid than the rise in the productivity of labour ; but from then on the contrary was the case, wages remaining practically stationary.

The efforts to increase output do not appear, however, to have

¹ The *Monthly Statistical Bulletins* of the S.E.C.

been maintained. In 1925 a large number of disputes broke out again in all branches of industry. The main reason for the workers' discontent was the fact that, every time collective agreements were renewed, piece rates were lowered, and this continued so often that it resulted in a reduction of wages, although individual productivity was undoubtedly on the upgrade.

The unions were forced to take notice of this discontent, and the collective agreements signed during 1925 provided for higher wage rates. The result was that, beginning in July, there was a rapid rise in wages, coinciding with the industrial boom which, as has already been stated, led to hundreds of thousands of semi-skilled workers, whose individual output was necessarily low, being taken on by the industrial concerns. Hence it was that just at a period when wages began to rise anew, individual output began to decline.

Towards the end of the year the position was such that the industrial authorities made it known in no uncertain manner that no future rise in wages would be made as long as the productivity of labour did not increase. At the same time they demanded that industry should be freed from a part of its social charges, which exceeded 30 per cent. of the wages. The relative importance of the various social charges falling on industry during the period October 1925 to March 1926 is shown by the following figures published by the S.E.C.¹

Category of expenditure	In percentage of wages paid
Housing, water, light, and fuel	5.15
Protection of labour (clothing, crèches, sanatoria, schools)	5.79
Upkeep of factory committees	1.92
Social insurance	16.35
Various	1.09
Total	30.30

While not actually denying the merits of these demands, the trade unions considered that certain items had been somewhat exaggerated, and that in any case the workers could not give up what they had obtained by the revolution. The unions were, however, willing that certain charges should be struck off the budgets of the industrial concerns on condition that they were included in the budgets of other institution (trusts, Commissariat of Education, Commissariat of Public Health), and that no loss would result for the workers. In

¹ *Monthly Statistical Bulletin*, April 1926.

addition, they counselled the economic organisations to make a clear distinction between social charges properly so-called and other expenses, which give better results than do many measures of economy.

During 1926 the plan for the stabilisation of wages was more or less followed out, and there was a certain increase in nominal wages. But at the same time the cost-of-living index number increased rapidly (from 200 at the end of 1925 to 240 in May 1926), and real wages actually fell slightly (daily wages by 4 per cent. and monthly wages by slightly less). During the spring of 1926, when the cost of living was at its highest, the trade union leaders were again forced to make a definite stand, and a violent dispute broke out between the majority movement of the Communist party, led by Stalin, and the opposition, led by Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev. The latter considered it necessary to raise wage rates, and even to return to the establishment of wages in real roubles, while the A.C.C.T.U. stigmatised these arguments as demagogic, asserting that it was necessary to base the wage policy on results already achieved.

Nevertheless, in July 1926, when harvest prospects seemed to be good, it was thought an opportune moment had come for the consideration of the possibility of raising wages, and the A.C.C.T.U. insisted that a special committee should be appointed for that purpose. This committee, which was brought into existence by a Decree dated 17 August, decided, after enquiries, to raise wages in the less favoured industrial branches and undertakings. This decision was taken after all due consideration had been given to the economic situation of the country, and the committee endeavoured to co-ordinate the rise of wages in the general plan of industrial development.

But to many of the trade unionists this step appeared to indicate a return to the system of centralisation of the wages policy. Certain among them argued at the Seventh Congress that this fact was "the beginning of the end of the system of collective agreements". According to them, "the issue of a model agreement by the A.C.C.T.U. and the S.C.E. really signified the existence of collective agreements which took no account of local conditions".

The trade union leaders, with Tomskey and Vladimirov at their head, had to defend themselves against the accusation that they desired to revert to the methods of fixing wages employed during the Communist period.

The State, according to Tomsky, decides what sums it can spare for an increase in wages, after which it is necessary to decide who is going to profit from the increase, and "this is a question for the trade unions to decide".

Discussion also arose on another point.

For several months a number of government departments had no longer been concluding collective agreements with their employees, and at the Fifteenth Conference of the Communist Party a speaker went so far to say that, in these circumstances, the Union of Soviet Employees had no reason to exist, since collective agreements had disappeared. The wages report submitted to the Seventh Congress proposed, however, to entrust the A.C.C.T.U. with an extension of this system of "official classification", especially as far as State commercial employees were concerned, although it was pointed out by a speaker that it would not be to the advantage of State commerce to transform commercial employees into officials.

To this Tomsky replied that the return to "official classification" for employees had become necessary if abuses were to be avoided. That abuses already existed is vouched for by the fact that an employee working in a central organisation received 100 roubles, while those in the provinces received only 18, and that while employees began at an initial salary of 28 roubles, a miner's initial wage was 9.50 roubles.

In conclusion, it may be said that since 1925 wages have risen to a level just slightly under that of pre-war times, and it would seem that up to the present there is no possibility of a further increase.

The reports prepared for the Seventh Congress do not definitely indicate that wages will not increase any further, but they point out that "by constant and methodical activity directed towards the development of industry, the working classes and the unions will hasten the development of Socialism, which is an indispensable condition for the ultimate improvement in the material and moral conditions of the workers' lives".

At the same time, these reports made it clear that up to the present it had been possible to increase the productivity of labour by "simple measures and by increasing individual output", but that in future it would be necessary "to rationalise the processes of production and the employment of labour, to reduce the administrative expenses, to take action against absenteeism . . .", and that all this could only be obtained by a concentrated effort of long duration.

Thus it is seen that the present day policy of the trade unions is confined mainly to the adjustment of the position already acquired

What is necessary at present is to introduce more regularity in the payment of wages. The trade union leaders feel the necessity of equalising wages in the different categories, as sometimes the difference in wages is enormous. As Tomskey said at the Seventh Congress, "foreign workers coming here on mission are astonished at the enormous difference which exists in Russia between the wages of skilled and unskilled workers". According to a report made to the Seventh Congress, wages are greatly affected by bonuses, etc., and these are largely responsible for the large difference between the real wages of the various categories. In reality, the basic wages, which is only a small part of the guaranteed wage, is very often of very small importance in the actual wages paid. Thus, in the rubber industry, the lowest wage scale is 18 roubles, supplementary wages being granted to the extent of 93 per cent; in the electrical and technical industry, supplementary wages are granted to the extent of 109 per cent. of a basic rate of 16.19 roubles. It is true, however, that in the sugar industry, where the basic wage is 13.48 roubles, the supplementary wages only amount to 6 per cent.

There are two reasons why the unions must change this system. On the one hand, if the wage guaranteed by the basic rate were more important, it would be possible to avoid the great differences between the wages of the different categories. On the other hand, the prestige of the trade unions would be increased, as if the unions are really a party to the conclusion of collective contracts and to wage agreements their influence is practically non-existent in all matters concerning the wage bonuses, piece rates, etc.

Nevertheless, the tendency to level up wages does not seem to be wholehearted. At the Seventh Congress, the Reporter on the wages question, Mr. Vladimirov, pointed out that three groups of workers, namely, the technical staff, the employees, and the apprentices, could not be included in the scale of tariffs, where the proportion between the various extremes is 1 to 8. The A.C.C.T.U. should only have to draw up the extreme limits of wage rates for the whole of the trades, and the different unions should be free to determine their own scale of wages within these limits. In addition to this, special wage scales will be drawn up for the technical staff, the employees and the apprentices.

CHAPTER IV

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

It has been seen in the preceding Chapter that collective agreements, after being completely abandoned from 1918 onwards, were re-introduced in 1922. As the result of experiments made in various branches of industry during December 1922, the Fifth Trade Union Congress decided to re-establish the system of regulating conditions of labour, without, however, making it obligatory for the whole of industry. This decision was embodied in a resolution adopted by the Congress as follows :

While considering that the collective agreement is the most practical and useful method by which to establish wages, the Congress is of opinion that the conclusion of such agreements must not be made compulsory. As the trade unions are recognised by Soviet legislation as being the legal representatives of the workers, it is useless to render collective agreements compulsory, for it is impossible to standardise the provisions of the agreements unless a return is to be made to the regulation of wages by the State.

Certain trade unions had, nevertheless, adopted another point of view, and at a number of Conferences resolutions were adopted in favour of a system of compulsory agreements. These resolutions advocated compulsion, not only for private undertakings, but also for the nationalised undertakings and the various economic State organs which, moreover, showed hostility towards the system of collective agreements. As a matter of fact, as had been foreseen by the A.C.C.T.U., the trade unions met with considerable opposition from the economic organisations on the question of the adoption of collective agreements, especially as regards the drafting of the clauses relating to wages.

The Supreme Economic Council considered that it should have the last word on the conclusion of agreements. It desired to regulate the establishment of wage tariffs and to obtain an equalisation of wages for the workers in large-scale and small-scale industry. At the end of 1922, it published a circular on the necessity for the

registration and preliminary approbation of collective agreements by the economic organs, and even by the Supreme Economic Council. The A.C.C.T.U. did its utmost to have this circular cancelled, as it considered that if the State controlled the distribution of the industrial resources earmarked to provide wages, this would be equivalent to a reversion to the former system of State wage funds. It was argued that in approving a collective agreement, the State would pledge itself to guarantee the rate of wages fixed by the agreement, an obligation which it could not fulfil in view of the general financial situation. In a discussion on 14 November 1922, the A.C.C.T.U. declared that the preliminary approval of collective agreements by the Supreme Economic Council was inadmissible, and a Decree issued on 14 December ratified this decision.

At this period the trade unions encountered another form of opposition from the Government Departments. Certain departmental executive committees forbade the conclusion of collective agreements, owing to the financial difficulties in which certain undertakings and institutions depending on a local budget found themselves. The A.C.C.T.U., recognising these difficulties, made a compromise by which it was possible to conclude collective agreements embodying all the federations and all the undertakings dependent on a local budget in a given province. These agreements were therefore concluded between the Departmental Trades Union Council and the Departmental Executive Committee (or the Departmental Economic Conference).

From the beginning of 1923, all these difficulties gradually disappeared, and no further opposition was made to the principle of collective agreements. All that remained for the unions to do was to improve the conditions of the agreements and to exact their strict application.

In the eyes of the A.C.C.T.U., which saw much further than the local trade union executives, the collective agreement appeared to be a powerful means for the education of the masses, and the Council desired to use the negotiation of the agreements as an opportunity to get into closer touch with the workers. In the opinion of the Council all workers should participate in the conclusion of the agreements ¹.

¹ This recommendation was, however, very often completely ignored. Agreements were often concluded in the offices of the trust or trade union without the workers, and even, in some cases, the subordinate trade union executives having the least knowledge of its contents. The danger

One of the main results of this policy was the increased tendency to adopt local agreements. And later when, to standardise conditions of labour, a system of general collective agreements was introduced, the A.C.C.T.U. recommended that the local agreements should be included in the general agreements.

The importance and the number of the general agreements rapidly increased, and in April 1923 there were serious discussions between the supporters and the opponents of centralisation. During the following months the local trade union executives protested violently against the conclusion of general agreements, and it was then decided that, before signature, all such agreements should be sent to the local organisations concerned, which would send them back endorsed with any remarks they had to make. Once definitely signed, the agreement was to be returned to the local organisations and their attention drawn to the account taken of their suggestions.

This, however, was merely a temporary arrangement, as the A.C.C.T.U. was unable to rid itself of its tendency to standardise wages and conditions of labour. In the autumn of 1923 the idea of large general agreements gained ground, and the central trade union committees were requested to increase their activity in the promotion of the drafting of such agreements. Nevertheless, the Sixth Congress held in November pointed out that the tendency towards centralisation had to be temporarily suspended.

As regards the terms of the collective agreements, in spite of all efforts to standardise them, great differences are still to be observed. On the whole, however, the form of the agreements has been greatly simplified, and the model agreement issued by the A.C.C.T.U. at the end of 1923 contained less than half the number of clauses included in the previous model.

At present the outlines of a new model agreement are under consideration, and it is stated that a new model will shortly be issued by the A.C.C.T.U. and the S.E.C. It is hoped that the new model will lead to the avoidance of many of the difficulties which arise in the conclusion of collective agreements. At the same time there are still a number of trade unionists who are opposed

of such a procedure was pointed out at the fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party. According to recent information it would now appear that the workers are kept better informed, and according to the reports submitted to the seventh Congress, the terms of the agreements recently renewed underwent a considerable amount of scrutiny by general assemblies of workers. (*Trood* 18 December, 1926.)

to this method, as they consider that it is a reversion to centralisation. It is further stated that the form of the agreement will be still further simplified, and that it will in future contain no mention of the obligations of the undertakings to meet the cost of certain welfare charges, e.g. upkeep of crèches, beds in rest houses, sanatoria, etc., and eventually supply of water, light, heating, housing, etc.

An important point in trade union policy concerning collective agreements is their extension to non-trade unionists, although this principle was long in finding favour with the local organisations. At the end of 1922 more than half of the agreements in force in the Ukraine made no mention of this extension. Certain unions even included in the agreement a clause specifying that trade unionists from an outside union would be given employment only after all the members of the union signing the agreement had been placed. During 1923 the inclusion of all such clauses was actively opposed by the A.C.C.T.U., which still continued to show a tendency to standardise the agreements.

At present the system of collective agreements has become stereotyped. In January 1926 the number of wage earners was reckoned at 7,700,000, while the number of workers covered by collective agreements was 6,750,000, or 87 per cent. of the total number. The proportion of workers employed under collective agreements has varied very little since 1925, when it was 86 per cent. But the total number of wage earners covered by agreements has increased since that time by 1,500,000, or by about 30 per cent.

In certain branches the proportion of workers thus covered is much higher, and in the railway and inland transport services, the postal and telephonic services, and the mining, paper, printing, textile, and chemical industries almost the whole of the workers are covered by these agreements.

But, as may be seen from the following table, collective agreements are not so widespread in the public services.

PROPORTION OF WAGE EARNERS COVERED BY COLLECTIVE
AGREEMENTS

	Per cent.
Municipal services	81.3
Education	71.9
Administration and commerce	64.6
Fine Arts	58.3

At present there is a distinct tendency to limit in a certain sense the use of collective agreements in the public services. Officials are grouped in an "official category", which gives them the right to come under definite regulation.

The duration of the agreements show signs of lengthening. Until 1925 agreements were generally concluded for six months only. At present the unions are endeavouring to increase the period of validity to one year, with the exception of those clauses relating to wages; but, in those branches of industry where the average wage exceeds the pre-war figure, or where there seems little likelihood of a further rise in wages, this exception is not generally stipulated. In certain circles efforts are being made to follow the example of the western European trade unions by concluding agreements of two or three years' duration ¹.

In conclusion it may be said that the use of the collective agreement has become general in the Soviet Republic ². Nevertheless, the trade union leaders are not convinced that this extension is as effective as it appears. According to reports submitted to the Seventh Trade Union Congress, it is extremely necessary that both parties to the agreements should be more punctilious in the observance of their obligations, as it would appear that many infringements are committed, especially as regards the payment of wages. As one of the speakers stated at the Seventh Congress, "in order to ensure the observance of collective agreements, a system of supervision must be organised which is effective instead of being purely theoretical".

¹ *Policy and Activity of the Trade Union Movement in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 31.

² As may be supposed from the previous chapters, this does not include employees in State administrations.

CHAPTER V

THE TRADE UNIONS AND LABOUR DISPUTES

§ 1. — The Suppression of Strikes during the Communist Period

From March to October 1917 the working classes were in a state of almost perpetual friction with the employers, and this resulted in a large number of strikes, which were more or less organised by the trade unions. But from October the unions did their utmost to reduce the number of these strikes and even to prohibit them altogether, without, however, asking for legislative measures to that effect. The theoretical position of the Communist trade union may be described as follows. The strike is a weapon of attack against the employers. But as, on the one hand, those employers who remain are disarmed and impotent and can be rendered amenable by Government pressure, and as, on the other hand, most of the undertakings have become the property of the State, i.e. the workers themselves, strikes by the workers against their own Government have no justification whatever :

Having carried out a successful revolution, dispossessed the middle classes, and converted the factories and undertakings into public property, is it possible that the workers contemplate making demands, supported by strikes and disorder in industry, on their own Government? Such action would be contradictory to all common sense. Therefore it is perfectly logical that the strike must henceforth be rejected as a weapon by the Russian trade unions ¹.

A long period was, however, necessary for the complete adaptation of this theory, as there were still a considerable number of private concerns in existence. At the same time the unions did all in their power to settle disputes by conciliatory measures. Information

¹ LOZOVSKY : *The Russian Trade Unions and the NEP*, p. 10. Paris, 1922.

relating to the development of labour disputes is very rare, and of little comparative value, and data on this subject published between 1918 and 1919 in the *Statistics of Labour* and the *Documents on Labour Statistics* deal only with disputes brought to the knowledge of the various departments of the Commissariat of Labour. As such information is very incomplete, no useful purpose can be achieved by reproducing it in these pages ¹.

One deduction, however, that can be made from these figures : the number of disputes decreased from the middle of 1918 and this fact became even more apparent in 1919. If any other conclusion is to be drawn it is merely that the unions, which at this period were the sole arbiters of all that pertained to the establishment of wages and the conditions of labour, admitted no further protests either individual or collective after the definite settlement of a dispute.

As early as April 1918 the Central Trade Union Council adopted a resolution on internal discipline in the factories, which read as follows :

When a dispute arises between a factory committee and a group or groups of workers, the dispute must immediately be brought to the notice of the central management of the trade union concerned, and in more serious cases, when conciliatory measures proposed are of no avail, and the workers concerned refuse to obey trade union discipline, these workers are to be excluded from their union and will have to bear the consequences resulting from such exclusion ².

This was not a measure of pure intimidation. The *Labour Statistics* ³ mention certain cases in the metal industry where factory committees summarily dismissed workers who refused to accept trade union decisions.

Difficult as it is to obtain information on labour disputes after the Communist revolution, it is still more so, if not well nigh impossible, to find out anything about strikes. As has previously been pointed out, from the moment the majority of the undertakings were nationalised it was considered first as absurd, and later as a counter-revolutionary act, to have recourse to a strike. A characteristic document in this connection is the following resolution

¹ It should, however, be noted that, according to the *Statistics of Labour*, Nos 11-12, the majority of the labour disputes were settled locally without the intervention of the departments of the Commissariat.

² *Messenger of the Commissariat of Labour*, 1918, Nos 4-5, p. 352.

³ *Ibid.*, 1918, Nos. 5-7.

adopted about this time by a meeting of the Moscow Soviet and the delegates of the factory committees and trade unions ¹ :

At a conference of workers employed in the textile trades the workers stated that they had abandoned all selfish occupational interests and that they had only the interest of the State at heart. The workers, met in conference, consequently declared that strikes were illegal and that all strikers should be dismissed and brought before the workers' tribunals for punishment in accordance with the regulations of the proletarian dictatorship

But this cannot be taken to mean that strikes had completely disappeared from the beginning of 1918. A number of strikes, some of them of considerable importance, were afterwards reported in the Soviet press of July 1918. For example :

As the local metal workers' union has begun a strike which has not been met by adequate measures on the part of the executives of the union in question, the Regional Council of the Metal Workers' Union has ordered the Tula Union to take steps to elect a new executive body. No wages will be paid during the continuance of the strike. It has likewise been decided to stop the wages of the workers in the metal by-products work at Podolsk for the two days on which work was recently suspended ².

Apart from this fragmentary information on strikes it is impossible to find any really valuable data, especially after 1918. In point of fact, conditions existing at that time did not encourage the workers to go on strike. If the worker was discontented with his situation as regards wages and conditions of labour, it was much more simple for him, in view of the disorder reigning in the administrative services, to leave his work and go into the country in search of food for himself and his family than to endeavour to organise a strike. And this, according to available information concerning that period, is what happened in a great many cases ³. The average number of days lost — not including time lost by holidays and stoppages of machinery — by the undertakings as a whole was estimated at 71 per worker in 1920. This loss of time was made up as follows :

Delegation work	12
Annual holidays	5.8
Illness, etc	22.7
Legitimate absence	6.7
Illegitimate absence	23.6

¹ *Izvestia*, 2 July 1918.

² *Ibid.*, 11 July 1918.

³ *Statistical Review*, 1918-1920, p. 239.

Without doubt there were strikes, but their number was probably very small. That strikes did take place would seem to be shown by the *Statistical Year Book* for 1918-1920 which, under the heading "unjustified absence", includes absence "due to strikes". But that there was a distinct tendency to suppress them was evident.

From 1920 there was no longer any question of the workers being able to strike, as compulsory labour practically eliminated that possibility. By then all the railwaymen had been mobilised, and subsequently certain groups of skilled and technical workers were placed under military discipline. For these workers to strike was a counter-revolutionary act, and nobody desired to take the risk attached to it. This state of affairs lasted to the end of the civil war.

At the period the trade unions were the only bodies competent to deal with the disputes which arose between the workers and the Government. In the settlement of these disputes the trade union conciliation commissions took it for granted that there could be no conflict of interests, but only a difference in the interpretation of the legislative provisions. Therefore the only concession made by the unions when a decision did not meet with the favour of both parties was to request a final interpretation of the legislation from one of the departments of the Commissariat of Labour. In all other matters the activity of the Commissions was of a purely one-sided character.

§ 2. — The NEP and the Revival of Disputes and Strikes

Immediately after the introduction of the NEP the trade unions perceived that the whole situation had changed. With the reappearance of private capital, labour disputes again became inevitable and even in the State undertakings troubles seemed certain to arise the moment these enterprises adopted capitalist methods of exploitation.

It would be vain for the trade unions to deny the possibility of labour disputes. Previously it was the trade unions themselves which established conditions of labour (the executive authorities confining themselves to a purely formal ratification of the methods adopted). Now, however, these conditions are laid down, in State as well as in private undertakings, by agreements between the two parties concerned. And the existence of an agreement naturally pre-supposes the possibility of a disagreement or dispute ¹.

The unions were thus to revert to their usual methods of defence

¹ *Labour Messenger*, 1922, Nos. 11-12.

each time they thought it necessary to take up the cudgels for the protection of the workers' interests ¹ In these circumstances they had at the outset to decide on the attitude to be adopted in case of a dispute. Were they to allow things to go as far as a strike? In February 1922 this question was answered by the A.C.C.T.U., which, in agreement with the Government, issued instructions that all efforts should be made to reduce the number of strikes to a minimum.

These instructions admitted in principle the right to strike in State undertakings and institutions as well as in private concerns. But it was recommended that this right should only be used as a last resort and when all conciliatory measures had been exhausted.

In practice the attitude adopted by the unions differs according to whether the dispute breaks out in a State or a private undertaking. In the first case it is agreed that strikes cannot be tolerated, and that they must entail the punishment of the persons concerned in them. In the second case efforts are made to avoid a strike, which, however, is tolerated and does not lead to reprisals. In both cases recourse to arbitration is compulsory before a strike can be declared.

A trade union may declare illegal any strike begun without its approval, and may prosecute the delinquents before the workers' tribunals. No trade union organisation, with the exception of the A.C.C.T.U., can declare a strike in any given district without the approval of its immediate superior trade union executive. All strikes declared in a province are illegal if they have not been sanctioned by the departmental (provincial) inter-trade union council and by the central committee of the union concerned. The central committee of the trade union may declare a strike and inform the departmental inter-trade union council concerned, and if there is any disagreement on the subject between these two bodies this is settled by the A.C.C.T.U.

All decisions taken by the central committee of a trade union concerning the declaration and the cancellation of a strike are binding, and any local body not accepting these decisions is dissolved.

At the first indication of a strike a representative of the trade union executive is attached to the undertaking concerned. This representative requires the workers to make a statement of their demands, which he subsequently brings to the notice of the management of the undertaking concerned.

¹ LOZOVSKY : *The Russian Trade Unions and the NEP*, pp. 44-45.

§ 3. — Arbitration and Conciliation

From the very beginning of the application of the NEP, industrial disputes began to break out anew, and it became necessary to take measures to meet the situation.

Although all parties were agreed that the trade unions could not be both a judge and a party to the application and interpretation of collective agreements, there were two distinctly different opinions as to the basis on which the system of conciliation and arbitration should be founded. While a certain number of prominent trade unionists considered that the trade unions should no longer be entrusted with the settlement of disputes, others, taking up a political stance, were of a diametrically opposite opinion. The latter party feared that a joint system of conciliation of disputes concerning collective agreements and the granting of judicial authority to the Commissariat of Labour "would be a premature concession to the new middle classes, the hastiness of which had no justification". Such a step appeared to create a favourable atmosphere for the organisation of private enterprise ¹.

The supporters of this argument were therefore of the opinion that, while joint representation might be introduced into conciliation bodies attached to the undertakings, those disputes which could not be settled locally should be judge by the unions alone.

While this discussion was taking place, the disputes which broke out were examined in the first instance by the joint conciliation committees in the factories ². When these bodies were unable to give a decision, the matter was referred to the trade union conciliation committees or to similar institutions attached to the Labour Sections.

After some months of indecision, conciliation chambers were set up and attached to the departments of the Commissariat of Labour.

This was followed by the publication, by the Central Trade Union Council, of an instruction on conciliation procedure, which stated that, as the trade union conciliation committees had no further reason to exist, all disputes which the joint committees were unable to settle should be brought before a conciliation chamber.

¹ *Labour Messenger*, 1921, Nos. 7-8.

² The formation of joint conciliation committees, or to give them their full title, committees for the conciliation of disputes and the assessment of wages, was proposed in a Regulation dated January 1922 and formally sanctioned by the Labour Code and a special Order dated 13 November 1922.

This decision caused a certain amount of discussion. The party in favour of the maintenance of the trade union conciliation committees asserted that: (1) the conciliation procedure of the committees was more rapid; (2) the activities of the committees increased the prestige of the unions; (3) if the conciliation of all disputes were entrusted to the Commissariat of Labour or the chambers of conciliation, the weakening of the unions which would thereby result, and the slowness of the procedure, would encourage the workers to go on strike in order to hasten the settlement of the disputes ¹.

At numerous trade union conferences demands were made for the maintenance of the trade union conciliation bodies as courts of second instance. A number of collective agreements signed about this time contained a clause stipulating that disputes should be submitted to the trade union conciliation bodies before being referred to the conciliation chambers or to the arbitration courts of the Commissariat of Labour ².

This difference of opinion, which caused a good deal of excitement in certain trade union circles, came up for discussion before the Fifth Trade Union Congress (17-22 September 1922), when, on a vote, the opponents of the maintenance of the trade union conciliation bodies were found to be in a majority ³; a resolution was adopted approving the policy of the A.C.C.T.U. and "openly condemning all attempts to entrust the trade unions with the settlement of disputes, as such attempts were in direct contradiction with the position created by the labour contract".

This resolution signified the abolition of the trade union conciliation committees, and the first steps in this direction were taken in June 1923. This decision was, moreover, confirmed in November 1924 by the Sixth Trade Union Congress in the following terms:

The Congress formally requests trade union organisations to submit disputes to the conciliation chambers and the arbitration courts. This is the most regular procedure and the only one that will, at one and the same time, safeguard the workers' interests and ensure the smooth working of the undertakings ⁴.

Nevertheless, although the unions were no longer the sole arbiters of labour disputes, they still continued to play a very

¹ *Trood*, 9 Aug. 1922.

² *Ibid.*, 10 and 18 Aug. 1922.

³ *Verbatim Report of the Fifth Congress*, pp. 371-403.

⁴ *Labour Messenger*, Nos. 11-12, 1924.

important rôle in all such matters. Throughout the whole conciliation scheme they were represented in the joint committees on an equal footing with the employers, both official and private.

The trade unions showed a very obvious desire to extend the administrative powers of the joint conciliation committees attached to the undertakings, but in this they were opposed by the Departments of State. The aims of the unions in this matter were laid bare at the Fifth Trade Union Congress, which adopted the following resolution :

In order to put an end to the diversity of interpretation concerning the duties of the joint committees, the Congress calls attention to the necessity of considering these committees, not merely as organs of conciliation, but as executive bodies for the enforcement of collective agreements. The committees must therefore be entitled to examine the distribution of work in accordance with the various categories of operations, and basing themselves on the collective agreement or wages agreement, supervise and approve the standards of output and piece rates ¹.

The Sixth Congress held in 1924 made no change in these decisions, which were considered to represent the aspirations of the majority of the trade unionists. For these reasons, the trade union press takes every opportunity to approve the joint committees and to oppose all suggested limitations to their functions. It is generally considered in trade union circles that it would be extremely ill-advised to limit the competence of the committees to the single question of disputes, and thus to transform them into judicial institutions. " The most important duty of the joint committees is to prevent open disputes, by bringing about a mutual understanding on all matters which require as a preliminary the consent of both parties. " In this matter " the joint committees may prevent serious disputes immediately the possibility of them appears " ².

But while advocating the maintenance of the actual competence of the joint committees, the unions do not hesitate to criticise their work. Although recognising the utility and importance of the principle of conciliation, the various trade union conferences and writers in the press draw attention to the mistakes made by the committees. " We must admit, " writes a correspondent in *Trood* " that the joint committees have not attained perfection, and that there are still too many mistakes and errors in their work. " ³

¹ *Verbatim Report of the Fifth Congress*, p. 520.

² *Trood*, 4 Dec. 1924.

³ *Ibid.*, 25 Oct. 1924.

The chief reproach made in the Soviet press relates to the slowness with which questions are settled. " In the larger undertakings the settlement of a dispute drags on for two or three weeks. and this naturally gives rise to adverse criticism. " ¹ Another reproach which is frequently made concerns the workers' representatives, whom the press constantly accuse of being influenced by the management, to the extent of neglecting the interests of their comrades. Again, the workers often accuse their representatives on the joint committees of a want of appreciation of their privileges and duties, and of a lack of a sense of responsibility towards their electors. It frequently happens that the workers' delegates are not all of the same opinion, and this results in quarrels in the workers' groups. The prestige of the committee is thus lowered in the eyes of the workers to such an extent that sometimes they prefer to address their complaints to the director or the manager of the undertaking, rather than to the joint committee.

Since the end of 1924, " in spite of an improvement in the work of the joint committees . . . these bodies still cause a certain amount of dissatisfaction among the workers " ².

In order to bring the committees into closer contact with the workers and to facilitate their work in the larger undertakings, workshop joint committees have been attached to them

As has already been stated, what the workers most often criticise in the operations of the committees is their slowness. This, however, is not entirely due to bureaucratic methods ; account must be taken of the fact that the number of disputes is increasing. According to the report submitted to the Seventh Trade Union Congress by the Commissary of Labour ³, the number of disputes considered by the conciliation chambers and arbitration courts doubled between 1925 and 1926 (11,869 in 1925 and 12,935 in six months of 1926). The number of cases brought before the people's tribunals during the first six months of 1926 was 14,500, as against 24,900 for the entire year 1924.

Another cause of delay arises in the fact that the parties in dispute neglect to settle a number of points of detail in the courts of first instance. Thus, in 1925, 65 per cent. of the disputes were

¹ *Ibid.*, 14 June 1924.

² Report of the Seventh Congress, *Trood*, 28 Nov. 1926.

³ *Trood*, 12 Dec. 1926.

sent directly before the arbitration tribunals, which, it is said, “ have to examine cases containing 50 or 60 points of litigation, of which 90 per cent. come under the jurisdiction of the organs of conciliation ”.

A large majority of the disputes arise after the conclusion of collective agreements (10,180 out of 13,000 in one half year of 1926). The agreements are badly drawn, their clauses obscure, and the finding of the arbitration courts do not always tend to throw light on them.

The number of appeals is large, and this causes long, complicated and costly legal procedure. Finally, the want of judges delays the whole working of the labour tribunals, as in the R.S.F.S.R. this class of official has yet to be trained. Furthermore, the trade union assessors are changed frequently, as well as the labour inspectors entrusted with making the necessary depositions.

At present the trade unionists consider that “ the existing judicial system is competent to deal with the settlement of disputes ” ¹ but there is a general desire that “ legal procedure should be so arranged as to abolish bureaucratic delays ”.

§ 4. — Statistics of Labour Disputes

What has been said is more than sufficient to show the importance which the scheme for the settlement of labour disputes has acquired since the introduction of the NEP. In order to give some idea of the growth of disputes since that moment, the following figures relating to 1923 are reproduced. The number of disputes submitted to the conciliation and the arbitration courts of the Departmental Sections of Labour, amounted in that year to 2,691, affecting 678,667 workers. The proportion of these disputes in the two classes of undertakings was as follows :

	Number of disputes	Number of workers affected
State undertakings	59.1	90.6
Private and co-operative undertakings	30.9	9.4
	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

It is thus seen that it was in the State undertakings that the number and extent of the disputes were greatest; each of these

¹ *Trood*, 25 Nov. 1926.

disputes affected, on an average, 330 workers, as against 77 in private and co-operative undertakings.

These figures show clearly that the system of compulsion has been definitely abandoned. The following table indicates the proportion of disputes settled through official channels in favour of the workers and employers respectively, as well as the proportion settled by compromise:

Results	State enterprises		Private and co-operative undertakings	
	Percentage of disputes	Percentage of workers affected	Percentage of disputes	Percentage of workers affected
In favour of the wage earners	32.7	39.2	33.0	20.8
Compromise	51.1	42.6	50.6	68.2
In favour of the employers	16.2	18.2	10.4	11.0

The above table includes only disputes settled by the official institutions. The results of the decisions differ very greatly from those disputes which were settled by the unions themselves, as will be seen from the following table:

DISPUTES SETTLED

	Per cent.
In favour of the workers	67.4
In favour of the employers	21.6
By compromise	11.6

In Moscow the majority of the disputes settled by the unions took place in private concerns (small-scale industry), and in 65.8 of these a decision was given in favour of the workers. The same may be said of the disputes in the provinces, where the workers won their case in 73.8 per cent. of the disputes. In Petrograd, on the other hand, only 49 per cent. of the disputes went in favour of the workers, which is explained by the fact that most of them took place in State undertakings, and that the unions "treated the State interests with greater respect, and in these disputes gave fewer decisions in favour of the workers than in those which took place in private undertakings" ¹.

¹ "Labour in the U.S.S.R.", *Statistical Review*, Oct. 1922-March. 1924.

Mere methodical statistics exist for the period 1924-1925 ¹, and in the following table disputes are classified as central or local, according to whether they were submitted to a central or local conciliation or arbitration court.

Date	Central disputes		Local disputes		Total	
	Number of		Number of		Number of	
	Disputes	Participants	Disputes	Participants	Disputes	Participants
1924	166	1,027,900	3,968	726,200	4,134	1,001,754
1925 (1st half)	154	1,144,883	3,273	426,241	3,427	1,571,124

The majority of the disputes arose during the negotiation of collective agreements:

Date	Percentage of disputes arising			
	During negotiation of agreements		In other circumstances	
	Central disputes	Local disputes	Central disputes	Local disputes
1924	84.7	77.7	15.3	22.3
1925 (1st half year)	88	80	12	20

The question of wages was most frequently the cause of these disputes.

	Percentage of disputes caused in 1924 by			
	Questions of wages		Other questions	
	Number of disputes	Number of workers affected	Number of disputes	Number of workers affected
Central disputes	83.7	89.4	16.3	10.6
Local disputes	65.2	75.7	34.8	24.3

¹ MELNICHANSKY, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-35.

Most of the disputes ended in a compromise :

	Percentage of disputes settled in 1924		
	By compromise	In favour of the workers	In favour of the employers
Central disputes	49.7	27.5	21.8
Local disputes	39	37.6	23.4

Most of the disputes were settled by arbitration .

	Percentage of disputes settled in 1924 by	
	Chambers of Conciliation	Arbitration Courts
Central disputes	11.4	88.6
Local disputes	30.7	63.3

The above figures show the change which took place in the character of the disputes during 1924. The change is equally marked as regards the disputes, which ended in a strike.

Statistics relative to strikes during 1921-1923 are given below ¹ :

	Number of strikes	
	1921-1922 (1 Oct-30 Sept)	1922-1923 (1 Oct-30 Sept)
Strikes	447	505
Workers affected	183,680	154,278
Number of days lost	524,704	322,035

	Average number of strikes per month	
	1921-1922	1922-1923
Strikes	37.2	42.1
Workers affected	15,306	12,856

	Duration of strikes (percentage)	
	1922	1923
1 day	40.4	45.1
1-2 days	19.9	20.9
2-3 days	9.7	12.1
3-5 days	14.7	11.1
5-10 days		6.9
10-20 days	14.3	3.1
20-30 days		0.5
More than 30 days		—
	100.0	100.0

¹ *Labour Questions*, 7-8 July-August 1924. According to the author the statistics on strikes are incomplete, especially as concerns the number of days lost, which are really a very low estimate and do not represent the actual facts.

	Causes of strikes during 1922-1923 (in percentage)	
	Strikes	Workers affected
Wages	79.8	95.9
Conclusion of collective agreements	13.7	1.7
Other causes	6.5	2.4
	<hr/> 100.0	<hr/> 100.0

	Results of strikes in 1922-1923 (in percentage)	
	Strikes	Workers affected
Entire satisfaction	34.2	17.2
Partial satisfaction	31.1	37.6
No result	34.7	45.2
	<hr/> 100.0	<hr/> 100.0

Certain other facts are to be noted. In 1922-1923, the majority of the strikes (about 66 per cent.) including the larger part of the workers affected (95 per cent), took place in State industrial enterprises. In the great majority of cases, strikes were declared without consultation with the trade unions, and sometimes against their will ¹. As a matter of fact, only 11 strikes had the authorisation of the trade union organisations in State enterprises during 1923 and this circumstance had a certain influence on the result of the strikes. It may be seen from the above figures that more than half of the strikers had their demands refused.

In conclusion, it may be said that the strike movement has developed considerably. The unions are not always masters of the movement which, in such conditions, has very little chance of succeeding, because it is opposed, not only by the administration of the undertakings, but also by the trade unions themselves, that is to say, the two parties which have to deal with the dispute.

This situation is resulting in a loss of prestige for the trade unions among the workers. During 1925, several important strikes took place which brought to light the antagonism between the policy of the Communist trade unions and the claims of the workers.

The following table illustrates the growth of the strike movement during 1925 ²:

¹ *Messenger of Labour*, 1924, Nos. 5-6.

² *Ibid.*, 1926, No. 2, pp. 40 et seq.

Year	Number of strikes in					
	State enterprises		Private enterprises		Total	
	Number of strikes	Number of strikers	Number of strikes	Number of strikers	Number of strikes	Number of strikers
1925 (1st half-year)	58	12,498	34	1,658	112	14,157
1924	45	22,255	54	1,972	79	24,227

The majority of these strikes were caused by questions of wages; on an average they lasted one day, the longest being five days. Most of them were settled to the satisfaction, at least partly, of the workers. It is obvious that these strikes of short duration are of the nature of demonstration intended to hasten the conclusion of negotiations which show a tendency to be unduly protracted and are probably caused by antipathy to the unions.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL INSURANCE

§ 1. — Social Insurance and Welfare during the Communist Period

When the revolution of 1917 broke out, the system of social insurance established by the Government in 1912 was still in operation. In 1917, the workers' organisations had already worked out a new insurance scheme and their demands may be described as insurance against all risks (disablement and unemployment) covering *all wage earners*, the cost to be borne by *the employers and the State*. Other features embodied in this scheme were : (1) The organisation of urban sick funds to replace the sick funds in the undertakings ; (2) The administration of medical assistance through the social insurance institutions ; (3) the payment of full wages during sickness ; (4) Complete autonomy for insurance institutions.

This scheme was duly submitted to the Provisional Government, which adopted a number of legislative measures to meet the workers' demands, and, subsequently to the Soviet Government.

In November 1917, the Soviet Government issued a statement to the effect that it was preparing the Decrees necessary for the introduction of a social insurance scheme which would cover all the workers and all the poorer classes in the towns and villages. It was also stated that the system would extend to all loss of capacity to work, including sickness, old age, childbirth, widowhood, and unemployment. The whole cost of the scheme, which was to be managed entirely by the beneficiaries, would be met by the employers.

It thus appeared that, under the new regime, the entire administration on social insurance was to be entrusted to the workers' organisations. This principle was reiterated in the Decree of 11 December 1917 on unemployment insurance and in that of 29 December 1917 on sickness insurance. The general management

board for social insurance was attached to the Commissariat of Labour, which meant that it was under the control of the Central Trade Union Council. But with the nationalisation of the undertakings and the disappearance of the employers, on whom the upkeep of the scheme had been imposed, the State had gradually to include in its budget the expenditure for the maintenance of the social insurance institutions.

At this time there had come into existence a Commissariat of Social Welfare (*Obezpečenie*), which had been set up in April 1918 to replace the Commissariat of Public Assistance (*Priizhenie*), and this body had continued the administration of assistance to women and children instituted by the Czarina in 1913. A distinct tendency became evident in 1918 to amalgamate the social insurance scheme with the general administration of welfare work carried out by this Commissariat; but this idea met with great opposition in trade union circles, where it was maintained that the management of social insurance should be entrusted to a special commissariat or that the Commissariat of Labour should be left in charge. The non-Communist element of the trade unions even demanded that, in accordance with the declaration of principle made on 11 November 1917, the unions should be given complete control of social insurance. These different viewpoints formed the subject of a discussion at the Second Trade Union Congress held in January 1919.

The Government, which by this time had swung round to the trade union point of view, had already published a law dated 31 October 1918¹, in which it appointed the Social Welfare and Protection of Labour Section of the Commissariat of Labour and its corresponding sections in the local Soviets as the central and local institutions for the administration of the social insurance scheme. This decision was confirmed on 27 March 1919 by a special Order which defined the duties of the two Commissariats so far as social insurance was concerned.

Thus it was the trade unions obtained control of the social insurance scheme in its early days. At the end of 1919 their position was momentarily further strengthened when the services of the Commissariat of Social Welfare were attached to the Commissariat of Labour². But it soon became apparent that "this

¹ *Collection of Laws*, 1918, No. 89.

² This transfer was carried out without any official information being given by Decree or otherwise.

had been an ill-devised measure, as the methods of the two institutions were entirely different¹". Accordingly, a further Decree, issued on 21 April 1920, separated anew the duties of the two Commissariats, and this time the Commissariat of Labour, i.e. the unions, were left only the administration of unemployment relief and the establishment of the rates of pensions and benefits. Even these functions were further restricted towards the end of 1920, when the chief duties of the Commissariats of Labour may be said to have been to find the labour necessary for industry and to apply the principles of compulsory labour, two duties which had little in common with unemployment relief.

Thus, by the end of the Communist period, the trade unions, completely absorbed in other matters, had abandoned almost all the prerogatives which they had so persistently claimed at the beginning of the revolution. It is certain that this contributed largely to the transformation of the social insurance system into an "immense bureaucratic machine having all the faults inherent in this form of administration"².

Be that as it may, by the end of 1920, there was no longer any connecting link between the workers and the social insurance institutions. As regards the application of the scheme, the entire maintenance of the insured persons during the first two months' incapacity to work was, in virtue of a Decree dated 23 March 1919, charged to the undertaking employing them, the application of this measure being supervised by the insurance institutions. A subsequent Decree, dated 12 August 1920, increased the period of incapacity from two to four months, and still later the period was left indefinite and undertakings were forced to provide all their workers, fit or unfit, working or idle, with their wages in cash and kind.

§ 2. — The NEP and the Reorganisation of Social Insurance

Although the necessity of reorganising the social insurance system had been generally felt for some time, it was not until after the introduction of the NEP that definite steps were taken for this purpose. The Government had sanctioned the reconstruction of

¹ *Verbatim Report of the Third Trade Union Congress*, p. 54.

² N. A. MILUTIN: *The Social Insurance of the Worker*.

private capital and had granted autonomy to a large number of the nationalised undertakings on condition that they turned out a " commercial output ". It was quite natural in such circumstances that these undertakings should take their part in the maintenance of social insurance, and it was this reason which induced the Government to re-establish social insurance as a separate organisation.

The main principles of social insurance of the wage earners were laid down in a Decree issued by the Council of People's Commissaries on 15 November 1921, which provided for the participation of the Central Trade Union Council in the organisation of the social insurance scheme. This proposed co-operation was examined at a session of the Council held in February 1922, when it was decided to accept it. The Council even went the length of declaring that it was ready to take over the management of the entire system with the help of its local federations, although at that moment such a statement amounted to nothing more than a declaration of policy. In practice, the Council confined itself to indicating in a vague manner that it was essential to set up regional social insurance institutions, composed of representatives of the subordinate trade union organisations, which would work under the supervision of the official social insurance institutions.

During the months which followed the February session, the Central Trade Union Council and the unions in general did their best to get the management of the social insurance scheme transferred from the Commissariat of Social Welfare to the Commissariat of Labour. The reasons for this were explained in a resolution adopted at the Fifth Trade Union Congress as follows :

. . . The protection of labour and social insurance being closely connected, those responsible for their management must be in close and constant contact. With this end in view, and in order to guarantee an effective trade union influence on the policy and activities of the social insurance institutions, it is essential to entrust the management and supervision of the insurance scheme to the Commissariat of Labour.

The social insurance scheme was, however, not to be entirely independent of the State :

Such independence is comprehensible in a bourgeois State and is even indispensable as a weapon in the hands of the working classes ; but under the dictatorship of the proletariat it would merely engender a useless loss of strength to the system itself which could then be used against the workers' Government.

As regards the administration of the insurance funds, the Fifth Congress demanded that the beneficiaries under the scheme

should be allowed an active and real co-operation which would be supervised by the trade unions. The Congress also showed a distinct preference for the organisation of territorial funds, as it considered that social insurance funds set up in the undertakings would be too easily influenced by the managements of the undertakings.

The trade unions agreed, in principle, with the more recent Soviet legislation as regards the necessity of the social insurance scheme covering temporary disablement (illness, confinement, quarantine, etc.), permanent disablement, and unemployment. But they foresaw that the insurance funds would not be able in the beginning to deal with all branches of insurance, and especially with the provision of medical assistance to the insured persons. The Fifth Congress, therefore, suggested that the public health institutions which, in their opinion, were alone competent to carry out this work, should set up special departments to deal with medical assistance¹. At the same time the trade unions considered that it was impossible to achieve the ultimate aim of the scheme, which was to guarantee to the wage earners the payment of their wages in all circumstances², and they therefore recommended that no indemnity should be granted in cases of permanent injury when this resulted only in a minimum loss of capacity to work.

All these proposals were embodied in the Labour Code of 1922 (Chapter XVII), and the transfer of the social insurance services to the Commissariat of Labour was decreed on 21 December 1922. The Decree also stated that the director of these services was to be nominated by the Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U.

As regards local administration, the management was entrusted to the trade unions. In practice each fund was placed under the management of a committee of from three to seven members elected for a period of six months by an assembly of the insured persons in the given area. This assembly had to include representatives from the factory committees of the district, in proportion to the number of insured persons in each undertaking, and a representative

¹ It will be seen later that the unions endeavoured to cancel this concession shortly after they had proposed it.

² During 1922-1923, in order to compensate for the shortcomings of the Official insurance authorities, the unions organised a system of mutual aid societies. These, however, very rapidly degenerated into loan and savings societies, the organisation of which was definitely fixed by a circular issued by the A.C.C.T.U. in 1925.

from each trade union corresponding to the undertakings concerned.

In this manner the organisation of social insurance was carried out in accordance with the desires of the trade unions. But in a very short time the application of this wide scheme was brought to a standstill by the serious financial difficulties which arose.

§ 3. — Strife with the Economic Organisations

According to the Labour Code, social insurance contributions were payable by nationalised and private undertakings, and this obligation was recognised in the Penal Code. The rates of the contributions were initially so high that they were a heavy burden on industry. In 1922 they varied, according to the class of risk incurred by the contributor, from 21 to 28.5 per cent. of the wages earned. The undertakings which, for some time past, had been in very difficult financial straits and were hardly able to pay the wages fixed by the collective agreements, soon found themselves totally unable to meet these contributions, and their indebtedness to the social insurance institutions rapidly increased. In January 1923, two-thirds of the contributions were in arrears.

Nevertheless, the situation did not appear to be critical at this period, as the workers, ignorant of their rights, were not demanding their benefits, with the result that the financial reserves of the social insurance funds increased rapidly. This fact encouraged the economic organisations to suggest a reduction in the rates of the contributions and to undertake a campaign in this sense. In spite of protests from the trade unions, they gained their point, and a Decree issued on 12 April 1923 established new rates for the contributions. This Decree established two classes of tariffs: reduced tariffs and normal tariffs. The former, which applied to the administrations of nationalised enterprises subsidised by the State, included a total contribution of from 12 to 16 per cent. of wages; the latter, which applied to nationalised undertakings not subsidised by the State and, in general, to all other public and private undertakings, included contributions varying from 16 to 22 per cent. of wages.

Having given way on this point, the trade unions insisted on the strict application of the new rates. They obtained the publication of a Decree authorising the insurance institutions to prosecute those shirking payment of contributions. But this did not really do much good, and the Central Trade Union Council was forced to admit in

September that the benefits paid to contributors were unsatisfactory. The Council also drew particular attention to the defective organisation of medical assistance, and insisted that the funds deposited with the public health services for the provision of medical assistance should be withdrawn and entrusted to the insurance funds themselves. The Council even went the length of accusing the public health services of embezzling the funds intended for medical assistance in the general funds of the Commissariat of Public Health.

This action on the part of the Central Trade Union Council resulted in the conclusion of an agreement between the Commissariat of Labour and Public Health and the Central Trade Union Council, whereby the medical assistance funds were to be reserved exclusively for the benefit of the insured persons. Furthermore, all accounts relative to the administration of these funds were to be drawn up jointly by the institutions of public health and social insurance and the trade unions.

The trade unions were thus in complete control of the administration and management of the social insurance scheme, and their influence was predominant in the insurance departments of the Commissariat of Labour as well as in the institutions organised by the insured persons themselves.

During 1924, however, a violent controversy broke out between the trade unions and the economic organisations concerning the participation of these latter bodies in the management and supervision of social insurance. The fundamental cause of this discussion was the adverse financial position, which the central authorities were unable to remedy without drawing on the reserve funds. The two main reasons for this situation were, first, the irregular payment of contributions by the economic organisations which, pleading poverty, claimed that the contributions should be further reduced ; secondly, the heavy expenditure of the funds, which was attributed by the economic organisations to want of supervision. The economic organisations therefore demanded a direct share in the management of the scheme.

The claims advanced by the economic organisations for a reduction in the contributions and a share in the management met with great opposition on the part of the trade unions. Without absolutely rejecting the principle that the economic organisations should take part in the management of the scheme, the trade unions were very eager that the workers' opinions should be sure of a certain majority in the social institutions of all grades, and, while not repudiating the idea of a reduction in the rates of contributions, they were firmly

opposed to any diminution of the benefits granted. While the unions were ready to take energetic measures against malingering and the want of strict medical supervision, they maintained that all savings resulting from such action should be used to increase the benefits paid to victims of industrial accidents and diseases.

This discussion lasted until the end of 1924, at which period the General Social Insurance Council was set up. In this Council the unions managed to obtain a majority of votes, as four members were allocated to the Central Trade Union Council, and four to the economic organisations and the Commissariats interested, while the chairman was a nominee of the Commissariat of Labour.

The unions thus won their point concerning the maintenance of the rates of benefits, but they had to give way as regards the rates of contributions.

§ 4. — Results of Social Insurance

The trade unions had thus so far managed to impose their point of view as regards social insurance ; but when it came to actual practice their demands met, as has been seen, with many obstacles of an economic character. It was only with the greatest difficulty that they had been able to improve the financial working of the scheme, and equal difficulties had been met with in obtaining more generous terms for the payment of benefits.

As regards the number of contributors to the scheme, the unions had succeeded in affecting a considerable increase. The number of insured persons, which in 1923 was approximately 4,980,000¹, increased to 6,250,000² in October 1924 and to 8,333,300 by June 1926.

This increase had been rendered possible chiefly by the re-opening of certain undertakings and the extension of the system to special groups of workers (seasonal and agricultural workers, etc.)

Since 1923 the payment of contributions has greatly improved. Whereas at the beginning of that year the incoming contributions represented only one-third of the total contributions due, in 1924 the percentage paid was 80 to 90, while in 1925 income from this source exceeded the estimated expenditure for the first time³. For the financial period October 1925 to June 1926 on an average 95.2 per

¹ MILUTIN : *Social Insurance in the U.S.S.R.*, 1 June 1923, p. 10.

² *Labour Statistics*, 1925, No. 2 ; *Insurance Questions*, 1926, No. 44.

³ *Trood*, 27 Oct. 1925. This surplus was largely due to the payment of outstanding contributions.

cent. of the contributions were paid. If account is taken of the sums received in fines this figure increases to 97 per cent. ¹

As regard benefits, a long struggle was necessary before the unions were able to achieve a more or less complete realisation of their plans. The fundamental aim of the unions was to obtain the payment of full wages during temporary disablement. At the beginning of 1923 benefits were equivalent to 64 per cent. of the wage earned by the beneficiary, and it was only towards the end of 1925, as the result of successive increases in the rates of benefits, that full wages were first paid during incapacity to work.

The position as regards the provision of medical assistance is far from being so satisfactory. When the question of organised medical assistance for insured persons first arose, the Commissariat of Labour and the trade unions considered it advisable to entrust this work to the public health services rather than to set up new institutions. The public health services were therefore authorised to utilise the social insurance funds for the organisation of medical assistance. But from 1923 this system gave rise to a great deal of discontent. The public health services, which were very inadequately financed, were accused of utilising for their general needs a large part of the funds advanced to them for the organisation of medical assistance. It is very difficult to verify the truth behind these accusations, but it is known that the sums thus advanced from the insurance fund represented nearly half the resources of the Commissariat of Public Health. The result was that funds intended to cover the needs of 20 million insured persons and their families, were distributed over about 140 million people. It is therefore not astonishing that the contributors complained of the want of medical assistance. In this connection it is stated that the number of doctors is far too small, and that patients have often to wait hours in queues in order to get the necessary attendance. Further, medicines are extremely scarce, and often not to be had, while the hospitals contain only half the number of beds required. Preventive treatment, which was announced with a flourish of trumpets, is practically non-existent, and even to-day spas and rest houses can only take a very limited number of patients.

Several stages were necessary before a definite system of benefits for permanent disablement was evolved. In the early days these benefits were extremely small and were calculated according to the

¹ *Insurance Questions*, 1926, No. 44.

average wage paid in the district concerned and not on the wage previously earned by the incapacitated person. Moreover, legislative measures were not always strictly applied. In January 1923, persons who were totally incapacitated for work, but who did not require the services of another person, received only 14 per cent. of the average district wage; this proportion increased by June 1924 to 26 per cent.

The legislation followed the various increases in pensions step by step, and in 1925 not only were the disabled assured a pension equivalent to the wage previously earned, but three new categories of benefits were added to those already in existence. Finally, and this was most important for technical workers, an Order published in the beginning of 1926 guaranteed that all invalidity pensions would represent a certain proportion of previous earnings.

It should, however, be pointed out that not all the incapacitated receive benefits. The legislation in force contains certain restrictions of a semi-political character concerning persons having private means and the length of employment as a wage earner. These restrictions are, however, gradually disappearing, and no longer apply in cases of industrial accident, although they still hold as regards sickness and old age.

The benefits paid to the dependents of victims of fatal accidents or industrial diseases have gone through the same slow process of evolution, and even now the rates are not definitely fixed.

In spite of these restrictions the number of pensioners and dependents receiving benefits has increased rapidly and the situation in this respect is almost normal. On 1 July 1926 the number of social insurance pensioners in the U.S.S.R. (excluding Trans-Caucasia) was 584,405, including 309,589 disabled and 246,273 relatives of deceased persons.

As regards unemployment insurance, the position has been rendered difficult by the increase in the ranks of the unemployed, which has taken place since 1923. Nevertheless, the trade unions have obtained an extension of the categories of unemployed eligible for relief, and, at the same time, an increase in the relief granted. No complete information on this subject covering the whole of the U.S.S.R. is available for the years 1923-1925. The reports ¹ for the financial year 1925-1926 state that the numbers of unemployed in

¹ *Insurance Questions*, 1926, No. 44.

receipt of relief increased from 250,064 in October 1925 to 400,463 in April 1926 and fell again to 345,849 in July 1926. When these figures are compared with those concerning the allocation of monthly relief a great difference is to be observed. The monthly grants increased from 198,408 persons in October 1925, to 357,789 in March 1926, and to 263,921 in June 1926.

The statistics for the R.S.F.S.R. (two-thirds of the total) are more complete. For every thousand persons insured the proportion of unemployed in receipt of relief increased from 33.4 in October 1923 to 53.4 in February 1925. During 1925-1926 the average number of unemployed receiving benefits was 218,000, or 25 per cent. of the total number of registered unemployed. The monthly relief paid to the highest class of unemployed increased from 8 roubles at the beginning of 1924 to 10 in 1925, and to 15.4 in 1926 ¹.

The above figures are indicative of the important results obtained through the influence of the trade unions in matters of social insurance. Nevertheless, the unions are not content with their achievements, as they consider that although they have managed to obtain satisfaction for most of the workers' demands regarding benefits payable during temporary disablement, there are still too many restrictions regarding persons earning high salaries (although here also a certain amount of satisfaction has recently been given them in an Order published on 4 January 1926), and those in hospitals and sanatoria. Having succeeded in obtaining complete compensation for victims of industrial accidents and diseases, the trade unions are now demanding that this be extended to all forms of disablement and also to old age ². Finally, while admitting that it is extremely difficult at present, in view of the volume of unemployment, to provide relief for all persons out of work, the trade unions nevertheless consider that an effort should be made in this direction.

But in all branches of social insurance the trade unions are constantly encountering opposition from the economic organisations, which compel them to reduce their expenditure to a minimum. No sooner does the social insurance budget balance than the economic authorities seize the opportunity to demand a further reduction of contributions, while the unions continue to endeavour to increase

¹ *Insurance Questions*, 1926, No. 44 ; *Trood*, 15 Sept. 1925.

² As far as old age pensions are concerned, the first steps have already been taken to provide them in the teaching profession. Soviet officials are also calling for the reintroduction of pensions, and a complete system of pensions is at present under consideration.

the insurance benefits. Nor are they content with this, as they consider that the insurance funds should not be used solely to indemnify the sick, the maimed, the unemployed, etc., but that a part should go towards the development of a system of prevention which would result in a diminution of risk. Hence the tendency to make the insurance funds responsible for the upkeep of rest houses. The Government has also a leaning in the same direction, and recently decided that the social insurance authorities should devote a considerable part of their funds, roughly 30 million roubles, for the construction of dwellings.

The unions themselves recognise that much remains to be done to bring the contributors to appreciate the benefits of social insurance and that abuses are very common. On account of slack medical supervision, contributors are able to obtain excessive sick leave, and this is a very heavy burden on the funds. In order to prevent contributors from malingering and to force them to obey doctor's orders, it has been necessary to organise a service of domiciliary medical inspection.

But it is especially as regards medical assistance that the trade unions are dissatisfied. During 1924-1925 approximately 120 million roubles were granted to the public health services, while the estimated expenditure of these institutions for 1926 which had to be met by the trade union funds amounted to 180 million roubles. The trade unions are, however, persuaded that they are not getting a sufficient return for their money. Experiments made in the Ukraine, where a sort of autonomous medical service has been set up, tend to show that the contributions are sufficient to allow of the organisation of a satisfactory medical service. This conviction is gradually making the unions desirous of abandoning the scheme proposed in 1922 and re-establishing the medical services formerly attached to the sick funds.

All this goes to show that, although the trade unions have received great concessions as regards social insurance, the situation cannot as yet be considered stable. The State undertakings are showing greater disinclination than ever to pay their contributions; this was particularly evident during the economic crisis at the end of 1925. Whenever the question of economy arises it is always towards social insurance that the economic organisations turn their eyes. Nor must it be supposed that the financial reserves of the scheme are large; quite the contrary is the case. The total reserve funds at the beginning of 1926 were barely 30 million roubles, an amount which represents not more than two or three weeks' normal expenditure. It is therefore not surprising that the financial position of the scheme has been

described as "tight and even threatening" ¹. At the Seventh Trade Union Congress the director of the social insurance scheme stated that he estimated the working deficit for the financial year 1926-1927 at 22 to 23 million roubles.

During the last few months there have been renewed attacks against the administration of the scheme. Even the trade union leaders themselves admit that the system of benefits is not faultless, especially as regard supervision, and a stricter system of the distribution of benefits, if not an actual reduction, may be expected shortly. It is said that these reductions will be made specially in the supplementary benefits. It is also said that many workers subscribe to the funds merely to be able to claim a refund of the expenses incident to childbirth. Others, again, succeed in obtaining payment of the same benefit several times over. Funeral benefits, which in 1926 were 45 roubles, are considered to be too high, while administrative expenditure could be further reduced. But the item in which real economy can be effected is undoubtedly sick leave.

Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that the present difficulties render impossible any immediate development of those branches of insurance which are still in a backward state, such as invalidity insurance and unemployment insurance.

¹ *Trood*, 18 April 1926. Statement of the Director-General of Social Insurance to the Federal Conference of Social Insurance. Interviewed at the conclusion of the Conference, the Director stated that social insurance was emerging from a period of comparative calm to enter into one of considerable difficulty (*Trood*, 25 April 1926). This statement is especially true as far as the large industrial districts of the Ukraine and the transport services are concerned. In the Ukraine great difficulty is met with in balancing the budgets, while in the transport services there is a deficit of from 5 to 10 per cent. A certain amount of criticism is at present being made concerning the management of the transport insurance funds, which are the only funds where insurance is applied by trades. It is even considered possible that, for financial reasons, the autonomy of the transport funds will be abolished, and that these funds will shortly be amalgamated in the general scheme of territorial insurance.

CHAPTER VII

PROTECTION OF LABOUR

§ 1. — The Omnipotence of the Trade Unions during the Communist Period

During the period from February to October 1917, the watchword of the trade unions and the factory committees was "the eight-hour day", and this aspiration may truly be said to be the fundamental aim of the Russian trade union movement as far as the regulation of the conditions of labour is concerned. For many years past also, the Russian trade unions had been demanding the promulgation in Russia of labour legislation similar to that in operation in the great industrial countries, especially as regards the protection of women and children. Another claim which had constantly been made by the trade unions was that inspection of labour, which for over thirty years had been carried out by Government officials, should be entrusted to inspectors appointed by the workers.

It was these demands which formed the basis of the Soviet Decree issued on 29 October 1917. This Decree began by fixing the duration of the working day at eight hours for all classes of wage earners. It also sanctioned a rest period in the middle of the day, and established the principle of a weekly rest period of at least 42 consecutive hours, while limiting the number of overtime hours that could be worked. The same Decree further embodied a number of provisions connected with the work of women and children. A later Decree was issued on 18 May 1918, providing for a workers' inspection service on an elective basis. Thus in a relatively short time the demands of the workers were granted satisfaction in theory, if not in practice.

From this moment the official duties of the trade unions were

doubled as regards the protection of labour. Not only did the unions exercise supervisory functions, but legislative and administrative powers were conferred on them.

The first of these duties was assigned to them by the Decree of 18 May 1918, which entitled them to nominate the labour inspectors. Subsequently, when it was decided to organise a technical inspectorate (18 August 1918) and a sanitary inspectorate (3 March 1919), these two classes of officials were subordinated to the labour inspectors elected by the trade unions. In addition, the unions themselves created organisation to complete the work of the inspectors.

In 1919, the A.C.C.T.U. issued an order establishing permanent labour protection committees attached to the trade union organisations. The duties of the committees were various and included, *inter alia*, co-operation in all enquiries carried out and collaboration in the drafting of labour legislation, the study of injurious substances, and the investigation of preventive appliances. The formation of these committees was left entirely to the unions. Subsequently, labour inspection committees were set up in all undertakings employing more than 15 persons. These committees were composed of from three to five members according to the size of the undertaking, and the undertakings were advised to take steps in order that the management and the technical staff should be represented on the committees, and that the factory doctor should be admitted to their deliberations. The duties of the committees were to all intents and purposes identical with those of the similar committees attached to the trade unions.

As regards the legislative and administrative functions of the trade unions, these were explained in a general circular issued on 17 June 1920, as follows :

HOURS OF WORK

In cases of exceptionally laborious or dangerous work, the hours of labour may at the demand of the trade unions be reduced by the Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U. The application in the various undertakings of the general instructions issued by the Commissariat of Labour concerning the reduction of normal working hours is to be regulated by the trade union concerned in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U.

In this connection, however, the rôle of the trade unions must not be limited solely to the protection of labour ; all due consideration must be given to the requirements of production. Therefore, when, during the course of the work performed, it becomes obvious that the hours fixed for night work are having a detrimental effect on output, the trade union concerned has the right to submit a new scheme of hours of work to the Commissariat of Labour.

OVERTIME

In exceptional cases, when the trade unions consider a prolongation of working hours to be necessary, overtime may be worked to a maximum of four hours a day. In all such cases the authority of the departmental trade union council must be obtained and approved by the departmental section of labour.

REST PERIODS

In the case of work which is subject to regular interruptions, the rest periods will be determined by the trade unions in co-operation with the management of the undertaking or establishment.

REST DAYS AND HOLIDAYS

Weekly rest days will be fixed by the local inter-trade union councils, and may fall on a Sunday or any other day of the week.

In addition to fixed public holidays, the inter-trade union councils may, in agreement with the Commissariat of Labour, grant ten "moveable" rest days, which will be fixed according to the local custom. The inter-trade union councils will bring these days to the notice of the public through the local Soviets.

The date and order for taking annual holidays (15 to 30 days) will be determined by agreement between the management of the undertaking, establishment or institution concerned and the factory committee or committee of employees, as the case may be. In the absence of a factory committee, annual holidays will be arranged by agreement between the workers and the management of the undertaking. If it is impossible to arrive at an agreement, the question of holidays will be settled with the help of the president of the trade union committee.

As is seen, this circular gave wide powers to the trade unions, the unions, however, so far from being content, aspired to become absolute masters in all that concerned the regulation of labour conditions; they were even desirous of eliminating all State intervention in such matters, including that of the Commissariat of Labour. But they were unable to realise this aim before the beginning of 1921, when the new economic policy was introduced.

At that stage the Decree of 24 March 1921, which transferred the functions of the Principal Committee on Compulsory Labour to the Commissariat of Labour, transferred at the same time the protection of labour (previously under the jurisdiction of the Commissariat) to the trade unions¹. Another Order, published on 12 May 1921², provided that the central and local labour protection managements should transfer their services to the Central Trade Union Council and its local organs.

¹ *Collection of Laws*, 1921, No. 30.

² *Ibid.*, No. 48.

§ 2. — The Restriction of Trade Union Competence

The wide powers given to the trade unions in matters of labour protection were, however, of but short duration. Even at the Conference on Labour Protection which met in November 1921, proposals were made for the abandonment by the trade unions of their functions in this domain. These proposals did not find favour at that time with the majority of the Conference. But the second session (February 1922) of the A.C.C.T.U. adopted this idea, and it was embodied in a Decree dated 13 April 1922¹.

By the resolution on the subject adopted in February 1922, the A.C.C.T.U. decided that the trade unions, "being a party to the collective agreements which establish conditions of labour", must surrender all their prerogatives concerning labour protection, and that labour inspection must be carried out and financed by the Commissariat of Labour. From then on, the responsibility of the trade unions in such matters was confined to (1) the nomination of labour inspectors and the maintenance of close relations with these inspectors as regards the observance of labour protection measures, (2) the introduction in the collective agreement of the necessary provisions concerning industrial safety and hygiene, and (3) the preparation of labour legislation in co-operation with the local organs of the Commissariat of Labour.

This restriction of competence ultimately led to the suppression of the labour protection committees attached to the undertakings, and their duties were taken over by the factory committees, which were at the same time authorised to set up special committees should undue pressure of work require such action.

It would seem, however, that this policy was not carried out very thoroughly; at present, at least in Moscow², a trade union labour protection committee exists in most of the undertakings, although, it should be mentioned, it is always subordinated to the factory committee. These organisations deal with the application of the regulations concerning labour protection, medical assistance, sanitation and social insurance, collaborate with the visiting labour inspectors, are represented at the various Conferences on labour protection, and exercise a certain activity in various matters relating to education and propaganda.

¹ *Collection of Laws*, 1921, No. 22.

² *МЫТНИК : Labour Must be Protected*, pp. 8 et seq.

As regards the financial side of the regulation of conditions of labour, the trade unions were forced to recognise in 1922 that the scales fixed during the Communist period no longer met the requirements of the undertakings when they were managed on a commercial basis. Working in co-operation with the Commissariat of Labour, the trade union and inter-trade union organisations have confined themselves, since the beginning of 1922, to an examination of the conditions existing in the various branches of industry, and to the establishment of regulations compatible with the economic situation of the undertakings. Consequently, no real changes have been made in the scheme of labour protection during all this period, which may be said to be characterised only by a large increase in the number of scientific enquiries instituted to obtain the basis for a rational regulation of conditions of labour.

At the end of the Communist period, the industrial undertakings were in a state of complete dilapidation. This, naturally, was a source of great danger to the workers. Since then, the trade unions have been endeavouring, by means of collective agreements and special arrangements, to improve machinery and equipment. In spite of all they have done, they are still far from the complete attainment of their desires, as the financial position of industry has always been, and still is, their stumbling block. The number of accidents due to defective machinery and materials ¹ even seems to have increased during the past year, while abuses in connection with piecework rates and overtime are more numerous than ever. According to the report of the Commissary of Labour and speeches made at the Seventh Trade Union Congress, the number of accidents per 100,000 working days in July 1925 was 31 ; in August, 28 ; in September, 29 ; in October, November, and December, 30 ; in January 1926, 34 ; in February and March, 36 ; in April, 39 ; in May, 40 ; and in July, 41. In the Moscow district, the number of accidents in the building trade increased tenfold during the period 1925-1926.

The trade unions are obviously not in a position to ignore this increase in the number of accidents in industry. Not only is it their concern to protect the life and the health of the workers, but, having a direct and great interest in the welfare of the social insurance

¹ According to the Commissary of Labour, certain " antediluvian " undertakings in the Urals seem to require to be demolished and rebuilt if any safety is to be guaranteed for the workers.

institutions, they are naturally anxious to limit the expenditure of these institutions, for which the payment of pensions and benefits shows a tendency to become too onerous.

Trade union efforts to improve industrial safety are generally made through the medium of the collective agreements ; according to the Commissary of Labour, the sums thus obtained for that purpose amounted to 20 million roubles in 1925 and to 24 million roubles in 1926. This, however, would appear to be only a beginning. Up to the present, trade union activity has been mainly directed towards the improvement of welfare measures. This activity has shown itself in two forms, namely : the provision of rest houses, where a certain proportion of the workers may spend their annual holiday, and, secondly, the promotion of measures to provide dwellings for the workers. In the first case, their activity has met with a certain amount of success, although the number of persons granted board and lodging in the rest houses by the State has always been less than that demanded by the A.C.C.T.U. For example, of the 10,000 applications made during 1923, only 4,500 were financed by the State, although the unions managed to get their other applications granted by the management board of the social insurance scheme and by the economic organisations, by means of the insertion, in the latter case, of special clauses in the collective agreements signed. It must also be mentioned that a number of new rest houses has latterly been organised by the local authorities.

The trade unions are, however, not content with what has been done. At present there is room in various rest houses for 300,000 persons, but this number is considered insufficient. Too many formalities are attached to the choice of applicants, who must first appear before a medical board, and are then selected by the trade unions, which give preference to those of proletarian origin.

As regards housing conditions, the unions were at first forced to promote the development of co-operative housing societies among the workers. This scheme met with so little success that it was abandoned at the end of 1924. In a circular published in February 1925 the A.C.C.T.U. stated that, " the co-operative housing scheme is but a feeble measure against the shortage of houses, and the construction of workers' dwellings must be undertaken at once by the national and municipal economic authorities and, where possible, by the co-operative societies ".

It has been stated by the Commissariat of Labour that during

the financial year 1926-1927 the sum to be devoted to housing will amount to 162,900,000 roubles, of which 40 million will be provided from the State budget and 90 million from contributions from the enterprises (one per cent. of the wages) and the insurance institutions.

At the same time, notwithstanding all the efforts of the trade unions, the results obtained are insignificant when compared with the requirements. Generally it may be said that in the domain of labour protection the trade unions are just at the beginning of their task. Their endeavours to increase industrial safety or to organise preventive measures are bound up with their interest in social insurance, and the official labour protection institutions are complaining that they get no real help from the unions¹. The trade union labour protection committees exist only on paper, although much might be done to combat the carelessness of the workers as regards accidents by the organisation of lectures in workers' clubs, cinemas, etc.

The unions allow themselves to be too easily convinced that financial difficulties render it impossible for the undertakings to improve their equipment and thus to prevent accidents, and they show a great lack of energy in putting a stop to abuses and negligences which might easily be suppressed. Even the cleanliness of the undertakings leaves much to be desired, and this in spite of the numerous regulations in force.

The labour inspectors chosen by the trade unions "are continually changed and have not enough experience to enable them to carry out their duties satisfactorily". Although endowed with wide powers by Soviet legislation, even to the closing down of an undertaking, they make little use of their authority, and it is stated that they offer very feeble opposition to the constant abuse of overtime. It has even been suggested that they are all too willing to countenance and encourage the working of overtime. Further, their number is grossly insufficient; 72 per cent. of the inspectors elected are hand workers, most of them being of a very low qualification. The trade unions complain more especially of the insufficiency of inspectors in agriculture, the building trades, and private enterprises. It is stated that they have practically no authority, and that very often no efforts are made to carry out their instructions².

¹ *Labour Questions*, 1925, No. 11, pp. 20 et seq.

² *International Labour Review*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, July 1926, pp. 104-108.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRADE UNIONS AND EDUCATION

§ 1. — The Unions and the Commissariat of Public Education

One of the earliest institutions to be set up by the Bolsheviks after the successful termination of the October *coup d'état* was the Education Committee, which was brought into being by a Decree dated 12 November 1917¹. The Committee was composed of "two members of the Educational Workers' Union, one member of the All-Russian Council of Factory Committees, one member of the All-Russian Artists' Union, and one member of the All-Russian Students' Union". The composition of the Committee was considerably modified some months later by a Decree issued on 26 June 1918², which constituted it as follows: "Three representatives of Communist persuasion elected by the Educational Workers' Union and two representatives elected by the Central Trade Union Council."

These Decrees show the importance of the rôle reserved by the Government for the trade unions in the reorganisation of the educational system.

At the same time, it should be noted, the Government had no definite scheme prepared for this reorganisation, and everything that was done in the early days seemed only to aim at the abolition of the system then existing.

Everything possible was done to change the character of the former educational system so that the schools could no longer be a centre of middle class influence. . . . The secondary and higher schools were closed down . . . and the University professors dismissed³.

¹ *Collection of Laws*, 1917, No. 3.

² *Ibid.*, 1918, No. 46.

³ *The A.B.C. of Communism*, pp. 230-231.

Moreover, the trade unions did not possess the necessary trained staff; it was therefore necessary for them, before beginning reorganisation, to recruit members, and this occupied most of their attention in the early days. For these reasons, it is not astonishing that the first Trade Union Congress did not discuss any educational measures.

Throughout 1918 this position remained practically unchanged, and there was little or no co-operation between the unions and the Commissariat of Education. A certain amount of hostility was even shown by the unions towards the Commissariat. According to a report submitted to the Second Trade Union Congress, there were at that moment two distinct tendencies in the trade union ranks. All were agreed that the working classes were in great need of general and technical education, but while one party desired that all educational matters should be entrusted to the State in the person of the Commissary of Education, the other party strongly advocated giving the unions an entirely free hand in everything that concerned education.

The latter party professed to see in the Commissariat of Education a bureaucratic organisation managed by former officials whom they were desirous of replacing by younger elements drawn from the ranks of the trade unions; some even went the length of asserting that the theatres and universities directed by the Commissariat were having a pernicious influence on education.

A very curious phenomenon was the hostility shown in certain trade union circles to the *Proletcult*, the most revolutionary innovation of the Commissariat of Education.

This institution had been conceived "to centralise and direct the intellectual and educational work hitherto carried out in a disjointed fashion by the Soviets, factory committees, trade unions, co-operative societies, etc." It had been intended to make this institution the supreme authority of "the fourth element of the working class movement", the other three being the Communist Party, the trade unions, and the co-operative societies¹. As a matter of fact, the *Proletcult*, for which a grandiose future seemed to be reserved, soon ceased to interest itself in most matters of proletarian educational organisation with which it had been entrusted by the First Conference of 1918, and confined itself to becoming a centre of "proletarian artistic creation". The trade unions criticised the *Proletcult*, as they criticised all the other departments of the Commissariat of

¹ *Labour Messenger*, 1922, No. 2, p. 67.

Education, adding, however, that they considered its work perfectly useless. "Gone are the days when we hoped for Divine help and inspiration. The *Proletcult*, like the Divine power, cannot be counted on to help the workers in the dawn of their activity." ¹ The resolution adopted by the Second Congress drew attention to the "impotence of the *Proletcult*, which is out of touch with the masses and must be strengthened by the transfer of its management to the organised working classes" ².

The Second Congress, however, had a considerable influence on the trade union educational policy, as it decided to allow the unions to direct the work of the *Proletcult*, and to participate in the general scheme or reorganisation by representation on the organs of the Commissariat of Education. Another decision taken at the same time entrusted the unions with the formation of the department of the Commissariat appointed to organise and supervise technical education.

§ 2. — Trade Union Collaboration in Educational Matters

With a view to the realisation of the plan suggested by the Second Congress, the Central Trade Union Council created an educational section, which immediately got into touch with the corresponding bodies in the various unions.

The new section at once proceeded to organise a trade union instructors' school, with accommodation for 120 students, and to found a library of works and literature on the trade union movement, subsequently setting up its own publications service. In all its work a certain amount of opposition had to be overcome. When the proposal was made to found a trade union library, the section encountered a rival in the Moscow Inter-Trade Union Council; but the plan to set up a publications service met with the approval of the State Printing Office, which saw in it a means of increasing the circulation of propaganda pamphlets and leaflets. It was entirely due to this encouragement that the section was able to distribute 63,000 pamphlets during the first quarter of 1919. The section also began the publication of a monthly review entitled *The Trade Messenger* (*Professionalny Vestnik*) ³, and a weekly periodical called *The Trade Union Movement* (*Professionalnoje Dvizhenie*) which, in course of time, increased its initial circulation of 20,000 to 100,000 copies.

¹ N.....sky: *The Second Trade Union Congress*, p. 59.

² *Ibid.*, p. 118.

³ This review ceased to appear after three months.

One of the main duties of the section was to collaborate with the more important departments of the Commissariat of Education such as the Post-Scholastic Section, the Council of Artistic Trades, and the Section for Vocational Education. The section was also represented on the General Theatrical Management Board, and on the Distribution Service of the State Printing Office.

These duties were not accomplished without a certain amount of friction with the Commissariat. As has already been pointed out, two tendencies divided trade union opinion: the one refusing to acknowledge the competence of the Commissariat in educational matters, the other that of the unions. A compromise was, however, arrived at, whereby the Educational Section of the A.C.C.T.U. would, in future, occupy itself solely with educational matters not dealt with by the services of the Commissariat. But this distinction was too fine, and when the section began to organise technical schools, it found itself opposed anew by the Commissariat, which had been definitely entrusted by Soviet legislation with the entire organisation of technical education.

Meanwhile, the central and trade union organisations had also begun to take steps to promote education among the masses, although their activities were characterised by lack of regularity and uniformity. Almost all the unions published their own periodical, but these appeared very irregularly. Some unions organised lectures and conferences, others endeavoured to attract the workers to trade union clubs and "people's houses" by giving entertainments and organising amusements, while others specialised in the general intellectual training of young persons.

All these efforts, however, were unorganised and sporadic. No definite educational plan had as yet been established by the Communist Party, and even the *A.B.C. of Communism*, which dates from April 1919, says nothing about educational work by the trade unions. It was only in the spring of 1920 that Lenin ordered the unions to become the "school of Communism", that is to say, to train directors for the various economic and political organs of State, and to spread information relating to Communist policy among the masses.

The first step in this direction was obviously to train a sufficient number of skilled workers to replace those who had gone into the State military and administrative departments, and those who had left the towns for the country. Therefore all efforts were concentrated on the development of technical education.

The Vocational Education Management Board of the Commissariat of Education, such as it had been constituted in 1919, was far from being satisfactory to the unions. This board included only two trade unionists among its ten members, although the State Committee on Vocational Education included a majority of trade unionists. Under pressure of the trade unions, which, on this occasion, were backed by Trotsky, there was set up by a Decree dated 29 January 1920 the Principal Committee on Vocational Education (*Glavprofobr*)¹, which, although attached to the Commissariat of Education, enjoyed considerable autonomy, especially as regards finance. Further, the governing body of this committee included among its members a very active representative of the trade unions who was able to impose his point of view on his colleagues².

From this moment, the trade unions concentrated all their efforts on this form of workers' education. At the same time, an active "production propaganda" campaign was carried on in the factories with a view to persuading the workers of the necessity for increased industrial output. Indeed, this idea was one of the main features of the Communist policy of that period, and the unions were entrusted with its diffusion among the workers. This propaganda work was directed by a special department of the A.C.C.T.U. (*Vserossbureau Prozpropagandy*).

Until the end of the Communist period the unions were continually endeavouring to take a more active part in educational matters, and by the end of 1920 their influence in this domain was considerable. During the month of July they succeeded in establishing a compulsory system of technical instruction for the workers, and later this system extended to cover all students. At the same time, they were responsible for the publication of regulations concerning attendance at evening classes, etc.

All these activities were directed by the Central Trade Union Council, whose educational section was represented in all the trade union central committees. The Council also directed the organisation of workers' educational sections (*Secpor*) in all the large industrial centres. The result of this work was that at the end of 1920 there were about one thousand training courses in existence, of which 700 were short-term courses, and 87 for adult workers.

¹ *Collection of Laws*, 1920.

² For further details, see B. A. NICOLSKY: "Vocational Education in Soviet Russia", *International Labour Review*, Vol. XII, No. 3, Sept. 1925, pp. 386-401, and Vol. XII, No. 4, Oct. 1925, pp. 500-522.

As regards general education, practically nothing had been done at this period, and it was only towards the end of 1920 that efforts were made to organise this side of the Commissariat of Education.

The 'Trade Union Instructors' School previously mentioned was extended during 1920 to accommodate 185 students, and propaganda through the press was continued actively. The weekly publication of the Council, *The Vocational Movement*, was, at the beginning of 1921, issued daily under the name of *Labour (Trood)*, and a new monthly publication, *The Labour Messenger (Viestnik Trooda)* was first issued. The distribution of pamphlets and booklets increased rapidly, until in one year the number distributed reached 667,000. During this period, the central trade union committees continued to issue reviews and other publications.

To sum up, it may be said that by the end of 1920 the trade unions had extended their activities to all branches of education. As regards technical education, their influence was undoubted in the *Glavprofobr*, while in matters of political propaganda the unions had joined forces with the Central Committee of Political Education (*Glavpolitprosvet*). At this period the trade unions had their own schools (not only technical institutions, but also primary schools for the workers' children), their own teaching staff, and a large education budget.

Their influence was so great that at the beginning of 1921 the question arose of granting the Central Trade Union Council a certain number of seats on the Governing Body of the Commissariat of Education.

§ 3. — The NEP and the Relinquishment of General Educational Functions by the Trade Unions

The situation thus created was certainly somewhat abnormal, though the development of the educational functions of the unions no doubt corresponded to the necessity of counterbalancing the negligence in these matters of the departments of the Commissariat of Education. But the introduction of the NEP compelled the unions once again to give their attention to questions more closely connected with labour, such as wages, collective agreements, etc. This change of policy was the more rapid as funds had begun to run short, and the unions were only too glad to relinquish a large part of their educational duties which, moreover, they had accepted only in self-defence.

It was in the spring of 1921 that the unions first began to abandon

their prerogatives in connection with education. A resolution adopted at the Fourth Trade Union Congress, which was held in that year, showed a marked desire on the part of the unions to hand over the whole management of educational matters to the Commissariat of Education. As far as the unions were concerned, this resolution merely asked them to continue their propaganda among the workers with a view to combating illiteracy. They were also entrusted with the management and supervision of the *Glavprofobr* in co-operation with the economic organisations, and were required to favour the entrance of workers and their children in the institutions of higher education.

All these changes led to a certain amount of confusion, and the limitation of the respective spheres of activity of the State Departments and the trade unions remained undefined for some considerable time. The result was that during this period of transition a certain number of disputes arose between the unions and the Commissariat of Education and its organs, especially the *Glavpolitprosvet*. As will be seen, these disputes lasted throughout 1922.

At the beginning of that year, during the February session of the A.C.C.T.U., a further change in the educational policy of the trade unions became evident, the main features of which were outlined by the Fifth Trade Union Congress, held in September 1922.

The resolution adopted by this Congress in this connection established the principle that the educational work of the trade unions had to be developed mainly from a trade union and Communist point of view. The trade union, it was repeated, must be a school of Communism. Therefore it was necessary that, without entirely discarding all interest in questions of general and technical education properly so-called, the unions should leave their solution to the official education authorities. The immediate consequence of this decision was that the trade unions had to relinquish the management of the schools which they had assumed and for which they had provided the necessary financial resources, in co-operation with economic organisations.

This transfer was all the more necessary as at that moment the financial situation of the trade unions and the economic organisations was particularly difficult. Even had they wished to continue to finance these schools and their tutorial staff, the unions could not have done so. Therefore, from the beginning of 1923, the Central Council began to transfer the trade union schools to the management of the Commissariat of Education, and, in some cases, to close them

altogether. This policy was sanctioned in the month of August 1923 by an Order of the Council of People's Commissaries.

But while surrendering the management of a considerable proportion of the educational establishments, the trade unions reserved the right of supervision. The Central Council remained in close contact with the Commissariat of Education for the preparation of general curricula, reports to the Soviet Congress, etc., this liaison being particularly close with the *Glavprofobn*.

Trade union collaboration with the Departments entrusted with the management of the educational scheme took two distinct forms. In the first place, when the central and local educational budgets were under discussion, the trade unions used their influence to obtain for the educational departments credits the grant of which the economic situation of the country might otherwise have prevented, and in the second place they endeavoured to get their educational programmes adopted by the public education departments. They insisted on the development of primary schools, especially the factory schools, and on the reduction in a number of higher schools in order that those which were maintained should be able to function normally.

Furthermore, the trade unions tried to encourage the workers to take advantage of the benefits of education, by including in collective agreements special clauses concerning industrial apprenticeship and the constitution of evening classes. Finally, they organised scholarships for students of proletarian origin. •

These relations between the trade unions and the official educational departments were not always carried on without a certain amount of friction. A line of demarcation between the activity of the trade unions and that of the official departments was very difficult to establish, especially as regards matters of political education. The Commissariat of Education had its own special department for this form of education (*Glavpolitprosvet*), and this institution had been given a free hand in this domain by a Decree issued in 1921. Under the pretext that trade union clubs were institutions of political education, the *Glavpolitprosvet* endeavoured on several occasions to take over the financial and administrative management of these institutions, with the result that the trade unions were in great danger of losing all their influence in their own clubs. After long discussion, the Central Trade Union Council and the *Glavpolitprosvet* managed to delimit, so far as possible, their respective spheres of activity in this connection.

At present the unions manage the clubs more or less independently, but the organs of the *Glavpolitprosvel* control their general ideas, and have even the right to insist on the dismissal of the responsible managers of the clubs.

§ 4. — Present Activities of the Unions

Such was the character of the general collaboration of the trade unions with the educational authorities. But what the trade unions were particularly anxious to develop was an intellectual movement among the unions themselves. The Fifth Congress had pointed out that the best way to achieve this was to promote and encourage the formation of workers' clubs, and it was in this direction that all the efforts of the unions were turned. The policy to be followed in the formation and management of the workers' clubs was defined at a special conference convened in September 1923 by the A.C.C.T.U. The main outlines of this policy included: the political education of the members, the raising of their intellectual standard, the promotion of the trade union movement, and the provision of amusements and entertainments for the workers

These activities were to be carried out in two ways, namely, the organisation of general club meeting and conferences and by the creation of special sections (*Krujoks*) for the study of certain specified subjects such as physical culture, trade union history, etc.

For the Communists, the real aim of the clubs was "to strengthen the relationship between the unions and the masses by providing for the intellectual requirements of their members"¹. At the same time the minutes of the A.C.C.T.U. for 1923-1924 show that in the beginning the unions did not place much importance on the formation of clubs, and that the provincial organisations had not as yet understood the necessity of getting into close contact with the masses. In general, educational work was entrusted to persons without the necessary training or authority. In the factory committees these duties were often conferred on a member of the committee, and it is stated that in the departmental sections the chief of the educational section was often quite out of touch with the educational institutions and undertakings, sometimes even being in complete ignorance of the names of their directors.

¹ Resolution of the Sixth Trade Union Congress.

In 40 per cent. of the clubs, membership was compulsory for trade unionists.

The activity of the masses by means of general assemblies, or through elected delegates, was replaced by the individual action of the manager of the club, who was often out of touch with the workers and had nothing in common with them.

In addition, most of the clubs were unable, in the absence of suitable premises, to accommodate more than 10 per cent. of the workers, and their activities were largely confined to the work done in the *krujoks*, which dealt chiefly with dramatic art and music (48 per cent.), physical culture (14 per cent.), and political propaganda (16 per cent.). But the *krujoks* were only able to influence from 3 to 4 per cent. of the total number of trade unionists, while public conferences and entertainments, etc., attracted only from 20 to 25 per cent.

The first year's experience, however, enabled the Sixth Trade Union Congress to define in November 1924 the policy to be followed in this respect. The resolution adopted by the Congress emphasised the necessity of developing those clubs already formed, and pointed out that membership of the clubs must not be obligatory for the workers, who should rather be drawn there by having their tastes catered for.

The Congress further advised the club organisers not to content themselves with providing attractions in the club themselves, but to 'organise "red corners" in the larger industrial concerns, restaurants, etc. In the "red corners" steps should be taken to interest the workers in the activity of the clubs, and newspapers and circulating libraries should be put at the disposal of members. Great importance was laid on the necessity of suiting the libraries to the tastes of the readers, and everything was to be done to foster the love of books, librarians being asked to assist members in their choice of literature.

The clubs were, of course, to be a centre of propaganda. The diffusion of economic knowledge was to be carried out by means of conferences, lectures, the reading of reports, and even the playing of short sketches dealing with industrial matters. Trade union propaganda was to be accomplished by the organisation of trade union evenings, special trade days, theatrical sketches, etc., while facilities for the study of trade unionism were to be developed both on the premises and by correspondence.

The clubs were advised to give particular attention to the promotion of physical culture and to the establishment of relations

between the physical culture societies and the various trade unions and undertakings. "All sporting events", says the resolution of the Sixth Congress, "must be carried out under the auspices of the union or undertaking to which the physical culture *krujok* is attached".

In addition to clubs and "red corners", the unions were to endeavour to reach the masses by other methods: schemes for propaganda in the provinces were to form the object of special efforts; the trade unions were to take part in the organisation of reading rooms; all large-scale enterprises and undertakings were to exercise a sort of guardianship over the neighbouring villages; demobilised soldiers were to be provided with books, newspapers, etc., and seasonal workers encouraged to follow courses for the illiterate.

Special attention was to be given to trade union propaganda among women and children, and women and girls were to be encouraged to follow courses in factory schools, while libraries were to contain a percentage of works relating to the women's movement.

Among the ethnical minorities trade union propaganda was to be carried out, and trade union literature published, in the language of the country. The unions were advised to make the greatest possible use of printed propaganda and to subscribe to the publications of the various trade union institutions. Where no local publications were issued, a column in the local press was to be devoted regularly to trade union questions. A system of posters was to be introduced and the unions were asked to bring pressure to bear on the official cinematograph companies to prevent the circulation of films of "middle-class ideology".

These instructions were gradually carried out and, according to official reports, the educational movement initiated by the trade unions in 1923-1924 made great progress during 1925. The following information on this aspect of trade union activity is taken from reports specially prepared for the Seventh Trade Union Congress¹.

It is thus seen that the number of clubs increased slowly, the

Date	Number of clubs	Number of members	Number of corners	Number of libraries	Number of readers
1 April 1923	1,951	239,000	—	2,146	422,000
1 January 1925	3,417	900,000	7,995	6,803	1,376,000
1 January 1926	3,418	1,020,000	21,700	8,085	2,206,000

¹ *Labour Messenger*, Dec. 1926.

principal reason for this being the want of suitable premises. On the other hand, the number of "red corners" increased with great rapidity, and in some aspect their activity outgrew that of the clubs. For example, while the number of entertainments given by the clubs and "red corners" during December 1924 was 50,000 and 25,000 respectively, the corresponding figures for December 1925 were 46,000 and 82,000. A similar phenomenon is to be observed as regards the *krujoks*. On 1 January 1925 there were 27,466 *krujoks* in connection with clubs and 8,832 attached to "red corners"; the corresponding figures on January 1926 were 25,020 and 17,000 respectively.

Physical culture, which has always been encouraged by the unions, has also shown great development, the number of persons taking part in it increasing from 27,000 in 1923 to 150,000 in 1924, and to 333,000 in 1926. Two opposing opinions exist as regards the form which physical culture should take. Some consider that it should be confined entirely to drill and gymnastics, while others want it to include all sports. According to a statement made by Tomsky at the Seventh Trade Union Congress, it is the latter opinion that finds favour with the masses.

At the beginning of 1926 the Russian trade union press included 23 reviews with a total circulation of 911,276 copies, and 89 newspapers with a total circulation of 799,350 copies¹. According to Tomsky's speech at the Seventh Congress these newspapers are not considered satisfactory.

In spite of all that has been done, the trade union educational scheme still leaves much to be desired. Although the clubs have increased, the number of persons coming under their influence is still very restricted. It is stated that only 12 per cent. of the trade unionists are members of clubs, while the actual proportion frequenting and using them is said to be much smaller. The great fault of the clubs and *krujoks* is that they will maintain a tutorial character, and this keeps adults away from them. As a rule they are frequented solely by young persons, others despairing of finding there the means to occupy their time. The conferences and lectures given are often tedious and the subjects chosen for discussion beyond the comprehension of the masses, whose tastes receive not the slightest consideration.

In general the club premises are unattractive, dirty, and often without furniture, while the staff is totally inadequate. According

¹ *Trood*, 14 Nov. 1926.

to a report made to the Seventh Congress, the club premises are very insufficient: intended to accommodate 1,820,000 members, their capacity is only about 905,000. Seven per cent. of the clubs have no assembly rooms, while six per cent. are composed only of an assembly room. In addition, the premises are often used for meetings and conferences of various kinds, and the proper activities of the clubs are consequently hindered.

As regards technical education, the most noteworthy feature is the development of the system of factory schools, which in 1926 numbered 1,000 with 100,000 pupils. Instruction is given in these schools to 50 per cent. of the young persons employed in industry. In addition to these schools, there is a system of apprenticeship training which is carried out collectively and individually under the supervision of skilled workers and which extends to 40 per cent. of the young workers. According to the trade union leaders "the whole educational system is far from being perfect", while Tomsky considers that the want of text books and tutorial staff is having a detrimental influence on the system. On finishing their studies, many pupils find themselves to be very incompletely trained, and are refused work in higher categories which ought to be assured them by their diplomas. In spite of the increase in the number of educational institutions, there are still about 10 per cent. of the juvenile workers who receive no technical instruction whatever. In view of the crying need for skilled workers in industry, which is in no way made up by young persons leaving technical schools, the trade unions are at present paying special attention to the organisation of technical classes, especially for adults.

Although it may be admitted that the trade unions have made great efforts to promote education among the workers, and that good results have been attained, it cannot be said that they have managed to interest the masses on the whole.

The causes for this are numerous. According to reports to the Seventh Trade Union Congress, the chief reason why the clubs do not interest the workers more is that the latter do not find there what they require. Since 1924 there has always been the intention to establish a democratic regime in the clubs, but in reality little has been done in this direction. In principle, the members are supposed to elect the club managers, but in practice these are often chosen by the trade unions. In any case, it is really the trade unions or the factory committees which manage the club and impose their will on the director, who is thus often unable to satisfy the

requirements of the members. By a mere order from the authorities, all entertainments may be cancelled and their place taken by a conference or lecture without the club members being consulted.

The principle of voluntary membership of the clubs is not always strictly observed. The club managers lack the necessary authority to control the members and often the club premises are entirely at the mercy of noisy youths, whose conduct prevents older members from enjoying what pleasures the club affords. But the chief reason why the wants of the members cannot be satisfactorily catered for is the inadequacy of funds. Here, as elsewhere, the likelihood of any immediate improvement is very small. The economic organisations complain that the cost of labour is too high and that the supplementary costs, including sums paid for the intellectual development of the workers, are excessive. There is therefore a distinct tendency at present to limit expenditure of this kind and this is likely to have a damaging influence on the trade unions' efforts in this direction.

As a matter of fact, 80.9 per cent. of the cost of the trade union educational scheme was met in 1924 by the economic organisations. This figure declined to 70.5 per cent. in 1925, and the trade unions were then forced to devote a greater part of their funds to educational activities. In 1924 the unions provided 9.6 per cent. of the expenditure, and in 1925 14.1 per cent. During 1926 several unions made large payments in this connection (the printers 36.7 per cent., miners 19.9 per cent., etc.). " Nevertheless, this increased expenditure is not sufficient to satisfy the growing requirements of the workers in educational matters. " This is forcing the clubs more and more to organise entertainments, for which admittance is charged.

At the present moment the trade unions are of opinion that the whole educational scheme requires reorganisation. At a conference of trade union educational institutions held in April 1926, Tomskey declared that " it was necessary to find new forms of activity which would interest all categories of workers. " He went on to point out that the educational institutions which by their character were in closest contact with the masses must discover concrete measures to attain this object. In the meantime the unions are endeavouring to evolve new ideas, but many think that the best form of organisation is the " Red corner ". As regards clubs, it is considered that these should be reserved for special activities.

CHAPTER IX

THE RUSSIAN TRADE UNIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

§ 1. — First Attempts at Contact

Prior to 1917 the Russian trade union movement, still in its infancy, had had but few direct relations with the trade union movement in other countries. But from the very first days of the revolution the Russian leaders endeavoured to establish contact with abroad.

At the Third Trade Union Conference, held in June 1917, Riazanov, speaking in the name of the Bolshevik party, proposed the following addendum to the resolution defining the duties of the trade union movement in connection with the constitution of a trade union International :

In order to establish international relations, the trade unions of Russia must immediately get into touch with all trade union organisations which in other countries are fighting against warfare and preparing a plan of action to prevent warfare ¹.

This proposal was rejected by the Conference, which retained only the idea of taking energetic action " with a view to the establishment of an international union of workers of all countries " ².

From this moment the gradual crystallisation of the Bolshevik plan to found a trade union International with Moscow as a centre is to be observed.

This idea rapidly gained ground after the Bolshevik victory in October 1917, and the First Trade Union Congress, held in January

¹ MILONOV : *Guide to the All-Russian Trade Union Congresses*, p. 48.

² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

1918, went so far as to fix a date for the summoning of an International:

The Russian trade union movement will never achieve its purpose unless it establishes close relations with the international trade union movement. The Congress considers it a part of its duty to do all in its power to stimulate the international workers' movement and to include on its agenda the summoning of an international congress of workers of all trades and a series of workers' congresses in the various branches of industry.

As a first step in this direction the Congress decided to convene for 15 February an international trade union conference in Petrograd. This decision, however, remained without effect until the Second Trade Union Congress, when Tomskey, in a report on the activity of the A.C.C.T.U., drew attention to the fact that it had proved impossible to organise the proposed international conference

After the close of the Second Trade Union Congress, the executive committee of the A.C.C.T.U. again took up the question in view of the approaching Conference at Berne. Although it was known that the opinions of the Russian trade unions would run counter to those of the other organisations, the Council decided to send a delegation to Berne with instructions " to co-ordinate its activity with the left wing parties of the Western European trade union movement ". This delegation was to enter into relations with the revolutionary groups of the Western European trade union movement. In the end, however, the delegation did not leave Russia, as it was feared it would be arrested at the frontiers of certain of the Entente Powers.

Subsequently the A.C.C.T.U. endeavoured on several occasions to get into touch with the Western European unions : in June 1919 it sent a letter to the English workers requesting their support ; in October, on the occasion of the first session of the International Conference, it launched an appeal " to all the workers of Europe and America " in which it took up a more definite position :

The A.C.C.T.U. invites all workers' organisations which are willing to co-operate in a really revolutionary attempt to liberate the workers from the capitalist yoke and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, to close their ranks against the international league of robbers, to break with the international union of conciliators, and, side by side with the A.C.C.T.U., to endeavour to organise a real international conference of Socialist and revolutionary trade unions.

All workers' economic organisations which are in favour of the class struggle are requested to reply to this appeal and to establish contact with us ¹.

¹ *Minutes of the A.C.C.T.U.*, 1919, p. 58.

Nothing further was done until the Third Trade Union Congress in 1920, when Radek declared that the international labour situation was eminently suitable for an offensive against the reformist trade unions. As a result of his speech, the Congress decided to "affiliate the Russian trade union movement to the Third Communist International and to invite the revolutionary trade unions in all countries to follow the example of the organised Russian proletariat"¹. The Congress further requested the A.C.C.T.U. to take the necessary steps for the preparation of an international trade union congress and, in co-operation with the Executive Committee of the Third International, to issue a proclamation defining the duties of the trade union movement in the struggle for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

§ 2. — Foundation of the "Red" Trade Union International

Shortly afterwards, taking advantage of the presence in Russia of workers' and Socialist delegations from France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, etc., and of delegates to the Second Congress of the Third International, the A.C.C.T.U. ordered Losovsky to open negotiations with foreign trade unionists². On 15 June a meeting took place between Messrs. Williams, D'Aragona, Colombino, and others, but had no definite result. Nevertheless, negotiations were continued and finally, in spite of persistent opposition from Mr. D'Aragona, an agreement was reached on 15 July 1920 which resulted in the coming into existence of the "International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions".

FIRST ATTACKS ON AMSTERDAM

This agreement resulted in ranging one against the other the two international trade union movements known since that time as the International Federation of Trade Unions of Amsterdam and the Trade Union International of Moscow.

The new International was based on the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It advocated an attack on Amsterdam in which the establishment of Communist nuclei in the existing unions would be

¹ *Third Trade Union Congress*, p. 158.

² LOZOVSKY : *The Trade Union Movement before and after the War*, p. 65 ; *Moscow or Amsterdam ?*, pp. 15-20.

used as far as possible as a weapon of offence. It further proposed to act in close contact with the Executive Committee of the Third International according to the instructions drawn up by the Third Trade Union Congress. Such were the main features of the first declaration of the International Council.

The provisional constitution of the new institution adds the following points to the general plan outlined above : action against reformists in general and against all attempts at a friendly understanding with the middle classes and more especially against the International Labour Office and Amsterdam ; propaganda and information work.

The Council issued subsequently (on 15 August) a protest in which it declared that the International Federation of Trade Unions was " on the other side of the barricade " and that it (the Council) already spoke in the name of eight million trade unionists.

This amounted to an open ultimatum to the I.F.T.U. On the secretary of this latter organisation (Mr. Fimmen) saying at Prague that the I.F.T.U. desired to collaborate with their Russian comrades and to extend the hand of friendship to them, Losovsky replied as follows in an article published in the *International Communist* of November 1920 ¹.

We are not fighting individuals, but a theory, and therefore the hand held out to us will be ignored. There can be no compromise, no agreement, with those who seek a solution of the social question in a friendly understanding with the middle classes. Every true revolutionary, every true Communist, must strive without repose to influence the masses, get possession of the trade unions, and transform them into organs of the social revolution. . . . That is why we have set up a hostile organisation.

The Russian trade union movement was thus endeavouring to become the centre of the reorganised trade union movement, and it lost little time in defining its position as regards the existing forms of trade unionism, including Anglo-Saxon trade unionism, anarcho-syndicalism, and social democratic trade unionism. The main points of the Moscow doctrine have already been explained in the first part of the present work.

Once having defined their standpoint, the Russian Communists, eager to make the Russian trade union movement the centre of the

¹ Reproduced in *Moscow or Amsterdam?*, p. 23.

new " Red " Trade Union International, set out to find support and allies. For this they had to make themselves known, and influential members (Losovsky and Glebov) of the temporary central office were sent to Western Europe. Losovsky made powerful speeches at Berlin and Halle, and an office was organised in Berlin to carry on propaganda work in Czechoslovakia, Holland, Luxemburg, Poland, and Switzerland. In the Anglo-Saxon and Latin countries the Russians met with little sympathy, but in the Balkans and in the East they rallied many adherents. All this propaganda work was financed by the A.C.C.T.U.¹

From the beginning of 1921 Moscow found itself opposed by the I.F.T.U. of Amsterdam, the leaders of which met in that town at the end of May 1921 and adopted the following resolution :

At a sitting held in Amsterdam on 18-20 May the Council of the I.F.T.U. approves the attitude adopted by its Bureau towards the acts of the leaders of the Third International, acts which tend to provoke dissension in the ranks of the working classes.

The Council considers that the Bureau has acted in accordance with the resolutions adopted with almost total unanimity by the organisations represented at the International Trade Union Congress held in London in 1920.

While emphasising the importance of these resolutions in the face of the danger of reaction resulting from the persistent activity of the leaders of the Third International, the Council, considering unity an indispensable condition for the success of the working-class movement, and being aware of the destructive force of the measures proposed by the Third International, declares that it is impossible to recognise the right of the workers' organisations to belong to both international unions at one and the same time.

Therefore, all organisations which adhere to the political trade union International of Moscow automatically exclude themselves from admission to the I.F.T.U.

The central organisations of all countries which have affiliated to the I.F.T.U., and more particularly to the international secretariats, must continue to apply the fundamental principles of the life and activity of the working classes organised economically.

THE FIRST CONGRESS OF THE " RED " TRADE UNION INTERNATIONAL

The First Congress of the " Red " Trade Union International met at Moscow in July 1921, when resolutions were adopted highly impregnated with Russian Communist ideas. The Congress approved the activities of the Provisional Council which, it declared, " has always adopted from the very beginning the necessary revolutionary

¹ *Minutes of the International Council of Red Trade Unions*, July 1920-July 1921, p. 28.

attitude towards middle-class dictatorship ” and which “ has given an apt description of the activities of the Amsterdam International, an organisation closely united with the International Labour Office, which is itself a department of the League of Nations ”, it (the Council) “ has acted most wisely in declaring war to the knife on such an organisation. ”

The Congress also approved the Constitution of the “ Red ” Trade Union International, several articles of which emphasise the importance of the rôle of the Russian trade unions. The organs of the new International are the Council and the Executive Bureau. The Council includes two representatives from each of the large industrial countries and four from Russia, while the Executive Bureau is composed of “ seven members, two of whom represent the country in which the ‘ Red ’ Trade Union International headquarters are established ”. As regards finance, the Constitution states that “ until a fund has been set up the federation of the country in which the ‘ Red ’ Trade Union International is situated will provide the necessary resources ”.

Throughout the whole Constitution of the new International, and in the resolutions of the Congress, the ideology of the Russian trade unions stands out in similar manner. Thus, it is stipulated that any organisation may be a member of the International on accepting the following conditions :

- (1) The recognition of the principle of revolutionary class warfare.
- (2) The application of this principle in the daily struggle against capital and the bourgeois State.
- (3) The necessity to overthrow capitalism by social revolution and to set up the dictatorship of the proletariat in the intervening period.
- (4) The necessity to observe international proletarian discipline.
- (5) The recognition and application of the decisions taken by the Constituent Assembly of the “ Red ” Trade Union International.
- (6) The necessity to break with the I.F.T.U.
- (7) The necessity for complete agreement between the revolutionary organisations and the Communist party in each country in all offensive and defensive action against the middle classes.

The liaison between the " Red " Trade Union International and the Third Communist International was defined by the Congress as follows :

The Central Council of the " Red " Trade Union International is entitled to send three representatives to the Executive Council of the third International in a consultative capacity, to convene meetings with the Executive Council for the discussion of important questions relevant to the international workers' movement and for the organisation of action in common ; where necessary it may issue proclamations in co-operation with the third Communist International.

This measure, which established close relations between the " Red " Trade Union International and the Third Communist International, was largely inspired by the connection already existing in Russia between the trade unions and the Communist Party and was carried only after heated discussion.

Again, it was Russian ideas which predominated in a resolution concerning the trade union policy to be followed. Workers' control and the system of organisation by factory committees form the subject of two resolutions, the Congress adopting the formula " one undertaking — one union ". The Congress further declared itself against the formation of trade unions in opposition to the reformist unions, preferring to gain possession of these latter by the introduction of a system of " Communist cells ", a method applied from the beginning of the Revolution to the Russian trade unions. This method was to be followed in the struggle against the international federations of reformist unions, and international propaganda committees were to be formed according to trades and industries to unite the dispersed forces of revolution.

The influence of the Russian ideology may also be recognised in the resolution relating to trade unions organised on a national basis, which states that " national prejudices must be overcome at any cost ". Once the Congress was over, the part played by the " Red " Trade Union International and the Russian trade unions in the international trade union movement developed rapidly. Even before the close of the Congress a number of propaganda committees were set up and had begun work.

INTERNATIONAL PROPAGANDA COMMITTEES

The propaganda committee of the transport workers organised offices and workers' clubs in the ports with a view to getting into

touch with foreign seamen, and in this manner the Russian trade unions were able to establish relations with a certain number of foreign trade unions. The International Transport Workers' Federation (I.T.F.) of Amsterdam did its best to combat the action of Moscow by excluding a number of federations of various countries and by refusing affiliation to the Russian railwaymen's and transport workers' unions. But in August 1922 a Conference of transport workers' unions in sympathy with Moscow was held in Hamburg.

The propaganda committee of the building trades rapidly succeeded in getting a number of adherents and forced the International Federation of Hamburg to admit it to its Congress held in Vienna in October 1922; later the Congress excluded the Russian unions.

The metal workers' propaganda committee sought permission for its delegates to enter Switzerland to attend the International Metal Workers' Congress held in Lucerne, but met with a refusal.

The miners' propaganda committee got into contact more especially with the German miners. Three times in succession did the Russian unions ask for permission to affiliate to the International Miners' Federation of Amsterdam, and the committee organised a conference of revolutionary trade unions in Essen at the end of September 1922.

In March 1922 a similar conference was organised in Berlin by the woodworkers' propaganda committee, but the Congress of the International Woodworkers' Federation, which met in Vienna in the following July, refused to recognise the Russian unions.

Again, in March 1922 the propaganda committee of the printing trades held a conference in Berlin, when it was decided to establish the headquarters of the committee in Germany. In September of the same year the Congress of the International Printing Workers' Federation met at Vienna and refused affiliation to the Russian unions.

The Russian textile workers' union requested its admission to the International Textile Workers' Federation, hoping to have its request backed by Messrs. Shaw and Turner, members of the English delegation. Unable to send delegates to the Congress of the Federation held in Paris, it got a Frenchman to represent it, but his request was refused, the Congress rejecting the Russian demand by a large majority.

The International Leather Workers' Federation refused affiliation to the Russian union at its Congress in August 1921; where-

upon the international propaganda committee of the leather workers inaugurated an active campaign to annul this decision, with the result that a large number of unions broke with Amsterdam.

The salaried employees' propaganda committee was formed in July 1921, just one month before the creation of the International Federation of Salaried Workers, of Vienna. The Russian union endeavoured to take part at the constituent assembly of the international organisation, but here again they met with a rebuff.

Even before the constitution of the " Red " Trade Union International, the Russian P.T.T. workers' union had attempted to get into contact with the International Federation constituted in Vienna. At the end of 1921 this body invited the Russian delegate to be present at a sitting of its executive committee. This led to correspondence in which the Russian union laid down a number of conditions, among which was the demand that the international organisation should break with Amsterdam. In March 1922 the Russian union decided to affiliate and accept the rules and regulations of the Federation ; but the executive council of the Federation, sitting at Coblenz in March 1922, declined to receive the Russian union on account of its affiliation to the " Red " Trade Union International. At the Berlin Congress of the P.T.T. workers the Russians were admitted as guests, but the Congress by 300,000 votes against 223,000 refused to allow the Russian union to affiliate to the Federation.

The Russian union of agricultural and forestry workers was also about this time refused admission to the International Federation of Agricultural Workers.

The Russian union of chemical workers despatched a delegation to the Amsterdam Conference of 1920, but this delegation, to whom a Dutch visa was refused, was only able to enter the Netherlands — and that illegally — after the close of the Conference.

In April 1922 the Russians made a demand for affiliation to the International Federation of General Factory Workers through the medium of Mr. O'Grady, who is reported to have stated that he saw no objection to the admission of the Russians ; but this request was refused by the executive committee of the Federation in September 1922.

It is thus seen that the attempts by the Russian unions to penetrate the international workers' federations met with little success, only one union, the food and drink workers, being granted affiliation. The International Food and Drink Workers' Federation

having declared at its Congress in Zurich that it was prepared to admit all workers' unions in its ranks, as it had not pledged itself in any way either to Amsterdam or Moscow, a demand from the Russian food and drink workers' union for affiliation was accepted on 7 March 1922. A Russian delegate specially invited took part in the sitting of the management committee of the Federation held in Vienna in May 1922 when, after long discussion, it was decided that the Russian affiliation should be provisionally maintained until the Brussels Congress of 1923. This decision gave rise to a protest from the Russian union which, however, did not withdraw its adhesion. In September 1922 a member of the management committee of the Federation went to Moscow to attend a Congress of the Russian union.

Such were the relations which were established between the Russian unions and the international workers' organisations subsequent to the first Congress of the "Red" Trade Union International. Simultaneously, the Russians made efforts to get into touch with local workers' organisations abroad, but these efforts were often associated with the more general attempts made by the "Red" International to detach from Amsterdam the largest possible number of unions, to promote a revolutionary spirit in the existing unions, and generally to prepare the way for Russian penetration in the trade union movement. This policy resulted in a large amount of dissension in the national trade union movement, the French General Confederation of Labour being especially affected towards the end of 1921.

§ 3. — The United Front

While the Russian unions were endeavouring to gain admission to the international workers' federations, the "Red" International was busily engaged in promoting the idea of a united front of all workers although, it should be noted, the central organ of the Russian trade union movement, the A.C.C.T.U., did not enter into direct negotiations with the I.F.T.U. of Amsterdam during all this period.

The Second Congress of the "Red" Trade Union International, held in November 1922, made no change in the policy decided on at the previous congress, when the main ideas were declared to be the

formation of a united front and the avoidance of an open breach even with the anarchists. In order to facilitate the realisation of these plans, the Second Congress even went so far as to cancel Article 11 of the Constitution of the " Red " Trade Union International, which defined the attitude of the " Red " Trade Union International towards the Third International. This concession resulted, among other things, in the affiliation of the French General Confederation of United Labour to the " Red " Trade Union International.

It was at this moment that the A.C.C.T.U. entered the fray, and at the World Peace Conference held at The Hague in December 1922, Lozovsky, secretary of the " Red " Trade Union International, who represented the A.C.C.T.U., reiterated the proposal to form a united front of all the workers' forces against capitalism. Concluding his address to the meeting, he stated : " We will form a united front with you if you wish, against you if you resist. "

The I.F.T.U. had at the beginning of this controversy declared itself ready to negotiate with " duly accredited representatives of the Russian trade unions ", but it refused to sanction the idea of a united front (which it regarded as an attempt to facilitate Communist penetration in the trade unions) until the " Red " Trade Union International had pledged itself to act loyally and had given proofs of its sincerity. The Federation further declared that all its efforts were directed towards securing the unity of the workers, but that such unity could only be realised " within the framework of the regularly constituted organisations in each country ".

A certain amount of bitterness developed in this controversy in the spring of 1923. In the month of May a conference was held in Berlin between the representatives of the International Transport Workers' Federation (I.T.F.), affiliated to the I.F.T.U., and the All-Russian Federation of Railwaymen's and Water Transport Workers' Unions, affiliated to the Moscow Trade Union International. The main object of this conference was to discuss the formation of a single front by these two organisations.

After a long discussion, resolutions were adopted providing for the formation of a joint committee and establishing a definite programme of action against the dangers of war and Fascism, which was to be submitted to the executive committee of the I.T.F. for ratification. In order to bring the united front into actual being, the conference decided to convene a second conference for the autumn of 1923.

The publication of these resolutions immediately gave rise to considerable controversy in the trade union press, during which the representatives of the I.T.F. who had taken part in the conference showed that they were not at all agreed as to the interpretation to be given to the decisions which had been taken.

At a meeting held in Amsterdam on 17 and 18 June the General Council of the I.T.F. refused to sanction the provisional resolutions of the Berlin Conference, and defined its attitude in two resolutions, of which the essential points are given below :

The General Council of the International Transport Workers' Federation regrets that, as a result of the agreement concluded between the representatives of its Executive Committee and the representatives of the All-Russian Transport Workers' Unions at the Conference held in Berlin on 23 and 24 May 1924, a difference of opinion has arisen between the I.T.F. and the I.F.T.U.

In consideration of these facts the General Council requests the Executive Committee of the I.F.T.U. to endeavour, in agreement with the Russian Trade Union Federation and the " Red " Trade Union International, to lay the basis of a concentration of all proletarian forces, and to examine, in conjunction with international trade secretariats, the possibility or otherwise of immediately bringing about this concentration in certain trades, until such time as national and international unity can be secured throughout the ranks of the working classes.

In accordance with the decisions taken at the Congresses of Christiana, Geneva, and Vienna, the I.T.F. is willing to collaborate with all working class organisations which are prepared to fight against war, reaction, and Fascism. It is a necessary condition to a united front with the " Red " Trade Union International or with any of the component parts of this organisation, that the " Red " Trade Union International should instruct its affiliated unions to cease all hostile acts against the organisations affiliated to the I.F.T.U. and should guarantee compliance with these instructions. It is also necessary that the Russian trade unions should declare their willingness to use every available means of fighting war, reaction, and Fascism in Russia as well as in other countries.

The Bureau of the I.F.T.U., which met in Amsterdam on 30 and 31 May 1923 to consider the resolutions of the Berlin Conference, declared :

In accordance with the London resolutions, the I.F.T.U. is always prepared to enter into relations with the Russian trade union organisations, but not with the dissenting minorities of the national federations affiliated with Amsterdam, and in conformity with the resolutions of the Congresses of Amsterdam, London, Rome and The Hague.

This resolution gave rise to a proposal dated 8 June 1923 on the part of the A.C.C.T.U. to convene a conference to draw up a plan of action against the danger of war.

On 23 June 1923 the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. confirmed its former declarations as follows :

The Bureau of the I.F.T.U. repudiates all responsibility for decisions taken at the Berlin Conference of the I.T.F. and reaffirms the decision taken at its meetings of 30 and 31 May 1923, which decision it maintains in every particular. It proposes to submit this resolution for reconfirmation to the forthcoming meeting of the Management Committee.

The Management Committee met in Amsterdam on 3 and 4 August 1925 and, after discussing the attitude of the I.F.T.U. towards the Communists and their invitation to form a united front, adopted, with one dissentient vote, the following resolution which once again laid down the conditions subject to which the I.F.T.U. was prepared to collaborate with the Russian unions :

The Management Committee . . . considering that under present conditions when the forces of reaction are making a supreme effort to crush trade union organisation, it is of capital importance for the organised working classes to feel that there is complete unity in the trade union ranks ;

Considering that this unity, if it is to achieve its purpose, must be effected inside the national federations affiliated to the I.F.T.U., and inside the I.F.T.U. itself ;

In conformity with its resolutions of Amsterdam, London and Rome, the I.F.T.U. therefore reaffirms its sincere desire to see the Russian trade unions united with the organised working classes of the whole world ;

Considering, however, that trade union unity can only be of real use and value when an atmosphere of mutual esteem and confidence has been established ; and

That for this purpose it is necessary that all attacks and hostilities directed against the I.F.T.U. and its affiliated organisations should cease once and for all ; and

That, in addition, the Russian workers must, like the organised workers in other countries, declare their willingness to fight war and reaction in all its forms in their own land ;

The Management Committee of the I.F.T.U. confirms the previous decisions of the Bureau and declares its willingness to enter into negotiations with the delegates of the Russian Federation of Trade Unions, as soon as these can be regarded as the genuine mandatories of the Russian trade unions which have accepted the conditions specified above and have acted accordingly.

During this period correspondence took place between the I.F.T.U. and the A.C.C.T.U. On 11 June 1923 the A.C.C.T.U. wrote to the I.F.T.U. recalling the proposals made at The Hague and expressing astonishment at the attitude adopted by Amsterdam towards the resolutions of the 'Transport Workers' Conference in Berlin. The A.C.C.T.U. repeated its proposal concerning a meeting

between the representatives of Amsterdam and Moscow. The Bureau of the I.F.T.U., after studying this proposal, replied by a letter, dated 2 July, requesting confirmation of the fact that the Russian proposal emanated from the Russian Federation of Trade Unions and not from the "Red" Trade Union International. The A.C.C.T.U. replied to this letter by requesting the I.F.T.U. to take a definite decision regarding the conference and "to observe elementary politeness towards the organisation of which the A.C.C.T.U. forms a part". Again, in September 1923, the A.C.C.T.U. wrote to Amsterdam protesting against a resolution of the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. of 4 August 1923 on the subject of the united front, a resolution which, they alleged, made a distinction between the Russian trade unions and the revolutionary trade unions of other countries.

At its session of 8 November 1923 the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. again examined the question. A resolution was adopted pointing out that, with a view to achieving international working-class unity on the basis of the constitution and general programme of the I.F.T.U., the Bureau was authorised to enter into negotiations with the A.C.C.T.U., but not with the "Red" Trade Union International. Replying to the invitation which it had received from the Management Committee, the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. wrote on 11 December 1923 to the A.C.C.T.U. recalling attempts made by various Russian organisations to obtain affiliation to the international Trade Secretariats, which are almost exclusively composed of bodies affiliated to the national trade union organisations adhering to the I.F.T.U. The letter expressed astonishment that such attempts should be made by organisations which subscribed to Article 4 of the constitution of the "Red" Trade Union International¹. The Bureau of the I.F.T.U. added, however, that in view of the importance, from the point of view of unity of the working classes of the affiliation of the Russian trade union movement to the trade union movement of other countries which was under

¹ As has already been seen, Article 4 of the constitution of the "Red" Trade Union International defines the aim of this organisation as follows: "To unite the revolutionary elements of the trade union movement of the whole world in order that they may give decisive battle to the International Labour Office (a department of the League of Nations), and to the International Federation of Trade Unions of Amsterdam, which by its programme and its policy shows itself to be one of the pillars of the middle classes."

the aegis of the I.F.T.U., it was prepared to try to do its best to reach a better agreement between the unions existing *de facto* in Russia and the organisations affiliated to the I.F.T.U. In conclusion the Bureau invited the A.C.C.T.U. to express its views on this question.

On 7 February 1924 the A.C.C.T.U. replied confirming its earlier proposals for a united front without any preliminary conditions¹. No programme was suggested for a collaboration such as might possibly lead to the realisation of unity among the trade union movements of the various countries.

Meanwhile, the Russian trade unions had continued their negotiations with the international federations. The result of these negotiations has already been seen, so far as the I.T.F. is concerned. The other federations as a rule maintained their previous attitude. The International Federation of Food and Drink Workers even tried retreat from the position previously taken up. Though at the Brussels Congress held in September 1923 it accepted in principle, by 22 votes to 20, the affiliation of the all-Russian union, it subsequently determined to insert in its constitution a new article of general application intended to prevent the formation of "celles" within the Federation, to provoke the dissolution of the Central Revolutionary Food Workers' Organisation set up by the "Red" Trade Union International, and to suspend the publication of the periodical issued by that organisation. The Russian delegates finally accepted this amendment to the constitution, which they had previously rejected, as they desired to be admitted to the Federation at any cost.

Towards the middle of 1924 changed circumstances favoured a renewal of negotiations between the Russian trade union organisations and the international organisations.

At a Congress held in Vienna from 2-7 June 1924, the I.F.T.U. adopted a resolution which once again defined its attitude towards the Russian organisations. In this resolution the Congress stated that, after noting the report on the previous negotiations between its Bureau and the A.C.C.T.U., it regretted the continued absence of the Russian trade union organisations from the I.F.T.U., "by reason of their refusal to accept the statutes and the constitution recognised by the duly authorised representatives of the chief trade unions of the world". The Congress also recommended the Bureau to continue "so far as compatible with the dignity of the I.F.T.U.,

¹ Press communiqué of the I.F.T.U., 20 Feb. 1924 and 12 March 1924.

its negotiations for the purpose of obtaining the affiliation of the Russian workers to the international trade union movement, by means of the necessary adhesion to the statutes and general rules of the I.F.T.U. ”

In a letter dated 16 July 1924 the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. forwarded this resolution to the A.C.C.T.U., and expressed its readiness to enter into negotiations with a delegation of the Council.

In the meantime, the Fifth Congress of the Communist International (political organisation) was held in Moscow, when the debates brought into clearer prominence than ever the close relationship existing between the revolutionary trade unions and the Communists. Discussing the policy to be followed towards Amsterdam, the Congress decided that every effort should be made to encourage and help the Russian trade unions to affiliate to the organisations members of the I.F.T.U.

§ 4. — The Campaign for Unity

The “ Red ” Trade Union International held its Third Congress in Moscow from 8-15 July. Without abandoning its policy of the united front, the application of which it even defined in further detail, the Congress decided in view of the urgent necessity of fulfilling the hopes of the workers and of developing the class war, to carry on propaganda in all countries for a single trade union international by means of the amalgamation of the two Internationals of Amsterdam and Moscow.

This change in tactics was explained not only by the setbacks sustained in the campaign for the united front, but also by the rebuffs which the “ Red ” Trade Union International had suffered in its various attempts to secure the admission of the Russian organisations to the international trade secretariats affiliated to Amsterdam. Indeed, as has been seen, out of 29 international trade secretariats, one alone — that of the food and drink trades — had pronounced in favour of the admission of the Russians, and this only by a majority of two.

Moreover, the workers themselves had opposed all action taken in this connection. Zinovieff recognised this fact in the following terms at the session of the Third International held on 7 July.

Let us be under no illusion. We cannot, even in Germany, set up powerful trade unions. Even if we could organise them, we should not succeed in conducting a successful economic struggle, and if we

attempted to do so, we should meet with a check. The working masses, who are to-day shunning the trade unions, would go over to social democracy. . . .

We are compelled to change our tactics. We must make a detour, in order to get the better of the trade unions.

We thought to succeed by a frontal attack, and we have been held up.

The general lines, therefore, of the policy of the Communist International, and of the "Red" Trade Union International were in the direction of setting up a single International, the object being to initiate an intensive propaganda campaign against the programme of democratic reconstruction drawn up and ratified by preceding congresses of the I.F.T.U.

Apart from any action for the fulfilment of the Communist programme, a certain spirit of *rapprochement* was in the air, and this seemed likely to facilitate the re-establishment of international trade union solidarity. Thus, on 25 July 1924, the General Council of the Trade Union Congress of Great Britain invited the A.C.C.T.U. to send a delegation to the next Trades Union Congress, which was to open in Hull on 3 September.

In virtue of the decisions of the Congress of Vienna, the invitation sent on 16 July to the Russian trade union organisation by the I.F.T.U. received a favourable reply. In a letter dated 24 July the A.C.C.T.U. expressed its satisfaction at the desire of the I.F.T.U. to restore the organic unity of the international trade union movement.

The A.C.C.T.U. pointed out, however, that negotiations could not be based on the principles embodied in the Vienna resolution, in view of the fact that the whole subject of the negotiations was the conditions of such solidarity, and that it was contradictory to the objects aimed at to lay down a preliminary condition of adherence to the constitution of the I.F.T.U. The previous decisions of the two internationals should therefore be discussed on a basis of equality and mutual respect. Finally, the Council expressed its readiness to send a delegation to some European town, Berlin or London for preference, for the purposes of a meeting.

Replying to this letter on 11 September, the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. pointed out that I.F.T.U. had always been desirous of re-establishing unity in the trade union movement, but that it was necessary to recognise that between the tactics of the A.C.C.T.U. and those of the I.F.T.U., which constituted the essential base of all trade union activity, there was a difference of principle much

more important than a simple question of political shade. The I.F.T.U. therefore considered it desirable before the opening of negotiations that the A.C.C.T.U. should forward a report which would permit it to judge the possible chances of arriving at an agreement on the principles and the policy to be followed.

In conclusion, the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. recalled the fact that the International Trade Union Congress of Vienna had prescribed very definite limits to the scope of the proposed negotiations, and added that, though this side of the question need not for the moment be considered, it should be remembered that the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. was not competent to go beyond the decisions adopted at the Vienna Congress without consulting the General Council, and, if necessary, convening a further Congress.

On 23 October, the A.C.C.T.U. replied by letter in the following terms :

It is our earnest hope to see the re-establishment of unity in the trade union movement; that is to say, as complete unity as possible among all trade union organisations whether they are affiliated to the Moscow International or to the I.F.T.U., or whether they are independent of any international organisation ; on the express condition, however, that all such organisations recognise the principle of class war.

We are convinced that the best means of arriving at this unity and of securing the creation of a single Trade Union International would be a general joint congress of the workers of the world.

In any case, we are pleased to learn that, whatever be our actual differences, it is the desire of the I.F.T.U. to do everything possible to find grounds of agreement. As this is also our desire, we declare that the essential basis for all the activities of trade union and workers' organisations is, in our view, the fact that it is impossible to reconcile the opposing interests of labour and capital.

The Council concluded its letter by proposing the following measures : complete abandonment of any form of collaboration whatever with the middle classes, and joint national and international action by the proletariat and its organisations, with a view to rendering all such organisations efficient to the highest degree in their struggle for the emancipation of the working classes.

At a meeting held on 1 and 2 December 1924, the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. decided to submit these proposals to the General Council of the I.F.T.U., notice of this decision being given to the A.C.C.T.U.

The discussion which took place in the General Council was followed by a proposal from the British delegation to convene a semi-official conference with the A.C.C.T.U., but this proposal was rejected by 13 votes to 6.

A resolution requesting that the A.C.C.T.U. should be informed that the I.F.T.U. was ready to admit it to membership on a demand being received was adopted by 14 votes to 5, the I.F.T.U. declaring itself prepared to meet the Russians in Amsterdam as soon as they had expressed their desire for affiliation.

A very important event in the negotiations for the establishment of friendly relations between the Russian and European trade union organisations was the visit of a British trade union mission to Russia at the end of 1924. Russian trade union representatives had previously been present at the Trades Union Congress held in Hull during September 1924, and had then invited the British unions to send a delegation to the Sixth Federal (All-Russian) Trade Union Congress, which was to be held in the following November. A British delegation did actually attend this Congress and made a prolonged stay in Russia, subsequently publishing a voluminous report on conditions in Russia which had a considerable influence on the decision to convene a Conference between the British and Russian trade unions in London in April 1925. This Conference resulted in the conclusion of a provisional agreement, which was ultimately ratified by the Trades Union Congress held in Scarborough in September 1925.

During 1925 the question of trade union unity, and even that of a conference to establish such unity, remained in abeyance.

In February 1925, the Council of the I.F.T.U. rejected the proposal from the British workers to convene, without any preliminary conditions, a conference between the I.F.T.U. and the Russian unions, being of opinion that such a conference was possible only after the Russians had made a demand for affiliation to the I.F.T.U. The reply received from the A.C.C.T.U. did not further enlighten matters, and in December 1925 the Council of the I.F.T.U. re-affirmed its decision of February 1925.

Meanwhile, the Russian trade unions continued their efforts to gain favour by encouraging foreign workers' delegations to visit Russia, but the results obtained from these measures during 1925 do not appear to have been of any importance. A certain amount of disagreement in this connection made itself felt at the Fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party between Tomsky, the President of the A.C.C.T.U., and Lozovsky, the President of the "Red" Trade Union International. Tomsky considered that methods which at one and the same time preached unity and provoked dissension did not

suit the circumstances, and that such methods were in no way furthering closer relations between the Russian and foreign trade union organisations.

The discussion broke out again in 1926 in connection with the general strike declared in England on 5 May, and the A.C.C.T.U. at once convened an extraordinary meeting of delegates from the central trade union committees to consider the situation. This meeting decided to organise a collection among trade unionists, who were asked to give one-quarter of a day's wages to help their English comrades. While awaiting the result of this collection, the funds of the Central Trade Union Council and the central committees were asked to advance a sum of 250,000 roubles, which was increased some days later to 2,250,000 roubles.

On 9 May the General Council of the British Trade Unions issued a declaration refusing all financial help from abroad, and the A.C.C.T.U. decided to use the funds already collected to constitute a fund for the English miners. At the end of the general strike the English miners were still engaged in their dispute, and Mr. Cook, General Secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, telegraphed on 17 May to the Russian Miners' Congress, then sitting in Moscow, that the Miners' Strike Committee was ready to accept the help offered.

The refusal of the General Council of British Trade Unions to accept Russian money gave rise to a violent campaign in the Russian press, especially in the trade union press. In the Russian Communist Party, opinions were divided as to the form which collaboration with the English members of the Anglo-Russian Committee was to take. Certain members of the group, led by Zinoviev, Trotsky, and Kamenev, called for immediate and complete rupture of negotiations with the English trade unionists, their watchword being "no relations with the pillars of capitalism". Others, on the contrary, desired, to continue negotiations, lest they should definitely lose all contact with the workers' movement abroad. The Anglo-Russian Committee met in Paris on 30 July 1926, but the English delegation refused to discuss the question of the miners. This attitude was severely criticised by the A.C.C.T.U. at a session held on 12 August; it was, nevertheless, decided to continue to collaborate with the Committee. This decision was subsequently ratified in November at the Fifteenth Conference of the Communist Party, and again at the Seventh Trade Union Congress held in December 1926.

CONCLUSION

In order that the reader may fully comprehend the influence of the Communist policy on the Russian trade union movement, it is necessary to give a brief summary of the development of the movement prior to the revolution of 1917.

In the first place, although the formation of Russian workers' organisations dates back to the latter part of the nineteenth century, all right of combination was strictly refused until the beginning of the twentieth century. By the Penal Law of 1874 "persons belonging to an association which aimed at causing animosity between the employers and workers and at promoting strikes" were liable to penalties varying from eight months' imprisonment in a fortress to deprivation of certain rights and deportation to Siberia.

In spite of this formal veto, illegal organisations were formed on all sides, generally at the instigation of members of the Social Democratic Party. As the movement continued to spread notwithstanding the most drastic prosecution, the police authorities endeavoured to organise workers' associations of a non-political character. For instance, the "Mutual Aid Society of Workers in the Engineering Industry" was created during 1922 in Moscow by the influence of Mr. Zubatof, chief of the *Ochrana*, and in 1904 the "Society of Russian Industrial Workers at St. Petersburg" came into being under the management of Father Gapon.

When the first symptoms of the revolution broke out in 1905 there existed a certain number of workers' organisations which were mainly charitable in character. These organisations, numbering about 905, included 387,000 members and were recognised by the authorities. In addition to these, however, there were a large number of illegal associations in being, especially in Poland and Lithuania.

After the revolutionary agitation of January 1905, the struggle between capital and labour took on a more acute phase. Anxious to improve their material position and encouraged by the political

parties, the workers feverishly formed unions (*soyuzy*), these being the first real basis of the present-day trade unions. Naturally the formation of unions proceeded most rapidly in the two capitals, Petersburg and Moscow, where the unions already existing were used as rallying points for the new organisations, and it was only in the autumn of the same year that the movement extended to the provinces. This movement led to an increase in strikes and resulted finally in the general strike of 1905, which caused the Government to hasten the publication of the manifesto of 17 October, in which the Tzar promised to grant a constitution, and the promulgation of the new Strike Act of 2-15 December 1905.

This Act, which aimed more especially at suppressing political combinations, was completed on 4 March 1906 by special regulations relating to societies and trade unions. According to section 1 of the Act, workers' organisations were only allowed to pursue economic aims. As a matter of fact, trade union activity still remained subject to complicated regulations and tedious supervision. The permission of the civil authorities, and even of the military, was necessary before a union could be formed, and the police had to be informed of all changes in trade union staffs and administration. Contravention of these regulations often entailed very severe punishment.

The result of these new regulations was that in 1917 almost all the surviving trade unions — 800 with 280,000 members — disappeared or led a harassed existence. By 1910 the total number of trade unionists in Russia was barely 35,000.

The strike movement began to develop again in 1911 and took on an importance comparable to that of 1905. The trade unions took an important part in the struggle, which was led by the left wing parties in connection with the Social Insurance Bill of 1912. Subsequently the unions underwent another period of persecution, and when the world war broke out their activities were brought to an immediate end by the declaration of martial law.

Nevertheless, with the prolongation of hostilities and the organisation and development of the industries engaged in war work, a vast field of activity was opened up for the workers' movement. With the formation of Industrial Committees of National Defence, which gradually spread all over Russia, the working classes were authorised to choose their own representative, and in each of these committees a workers' group was constituted to protect the interests of the wage earners. These groups seized the opportunity of getting

the workers together and encouraging among them habits of trade union organisation.

Thus, although there could be no question of trade unions properly so called, the working classes of Russia nevertheless found themselves on the eve of the revolution, if not completely organised, at least prepared to enter the ranks of a normally organised movement.

For these reasons the working-class movement was able to spread rapidly from the very beginning of the revolution of 1917. On 22 April 1917 the Provisional Government published an Order on "workers' committees in industrial undertakings" which cancelled all previous strike legislation. Two other Orders, issued on 12 and 24 April 1917, authorised trade unions to register with the local courts and granted the workers full freedom of association and combination, with the result that by July 1917 the number of trade unionists was estimated to be 1,500,000 and the number of trade union organisations about 1,000.

Thus, while the February revolution not only authorised but also encouraged the development of the trade unions, the Communist revolution of October, although resulting in a further extension of the movement, imposed such changes of policy in it that the whole nature of the movement was changed.

From October onwards the duty of the trade unions was "to group the proletariat in a single organisation which, under the direction of the Communist party, would apply the dictatorship of the working classes" ¹.

With this aim in view the Communist Party took immediate steps to gain control of most of the unions then existing, but this was not accomplished without a certain amount of resistance. In many cases force had to be used, especially against those workers whose occupations were of an intellectual character, such as civil servants, bank clerks, etc.

To facilitate the creation of a single organisation the formula "one undertaking — one union" was advanced, and all administrative and financial activities strictly centralised. At the same time the trade union leaders had the firm intention of including all the workers in the ranks of trade unionism. The workers were therefore enrolled automatically by the factory committees and, after a certain lapse of time, their contributions were automatically deducted from their wages.

¹ F. SENIUSHKIN : *Factory Committees in Russia*, p. 27.

While they were thus occupied in changing their internal organisation, the trade unions were also called on to perform multifarious duties of an official nature which transformed them to all intents and purposes into State departments. They had the right to legislate on matters concerning the protection of labour and wages; they provided the greater part of the management staff of nationalised undertakings and economic organisations; at the height of the civil war they acted as recruiting offices for the "Red" armies.

Trade union policy, as dictated by the Communists during the civil war, that is to say, up to 1921, resulted in a vast increase in the membership of the unions and greatly developed the trade union organisations and bureaucracy. But the moral results were the estrangement of the members from their unions and a total distortion of the minds of the leaders.

The worker, forcibly enrolled in a union and having no influence on his union's policy, came to regard the trade union organisation as a newly-created and badly-managed administration which afforded him no protection against industrial risks and fatigue, which moreover, had increased owing to the disastrous economic situation of the whole country; an administration which not only did not obtain for him the barest necessities of daily life but even opposed any increase in wages; an institution of a military character which at any moment could despatch him to the front or to a far distant factory; an administration which, after having promised all sorts of educational facilities had, in fact, permitted the destruction of the greater part of the educational institutions previously existing or created by the workers themselves in the early days of the revolution.

Far from making the workers' claims known to the State authorities, the trade union leaders busied themselves much more with informing the workers, and sometimes in the most autocratic manner, of the requirements of the State.

Appointed by the leaders of the Communist Party and not by the workers, they soon ceased to consider themselves as mandatories of the trade unionists. Nor did they feel that they were being paid from trade union funds, as the whole financial organisation of the movement was based on State subsidies. Briefly, they had become State officials transmitting the orders of the State and drawing unreservedly on State funds.

The trade union movement had become undoubtedly very widespread and important, but to maintain this position it was

necessary, according to Seniuschkin, " to apply persuasion and even force to the more backward elements of the working classes " ¹.

It was only towards the end of 1920, however, after the first experiments in compulsory labour, that the working classes showed any dissatisfaction with this policy, and at first the Communist leaders could not agree as to the measures necessary to be taken. The extremist element pinned their faith on compulsion, and had their advice been taken, the last vestige of freedom would have disappeared from the Russian trade union movement. Thanks to Lenin, however, it was the idea of persuasion that won the day.

At the same time, however, the whole general trade union policy was very experimental and it was only the realisation of hard facts that led to the evolution of a definite programme. An ample supply of these hard facts was provided for the leaders of the movement with the introduction of the NEP.

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The outstanding features of this new phase of the proletarian dictatorship were the return to capitalist methods of production and a consequent clash between the interests of the workers and the requirements of commercially managed industry.

It was necessary to convince the workers that the real object of unions was to protect their interests.

The first step in this direction was obviously to grant the workers full freedom to form their unions themselves, and thus it came about that the principle of trade union freedom was re-established, though only after a whole year's hesitation. At the same time the Communist conception of trade union freedom only went so far as to admit the workers' right to join or remain outside the existing unions. The unions themselves were not free agents and had to follow the general policy of the trade union movement taken as a whole.

The second step was to get the unions to curtail their zeal in regard to the protection of the workers' interests. This compelled them to renounce their exclusive competence as regards questions of wages, and in general to separate their activity from that of economic departments and the managements of the undertakings. To all intents and purposes this change of policy meant that the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

action of the unions was confined to being a party to collective agreements.

To put it briefly, liberty of the individual and action by means of collective agreements may be said to be the lines along which the trade union movement developed from 1922 onwards.

The return to freedom of affiliation led at once to a reduction of almost 50 per cent. in trade union membership, but from 1923 the situation changed and by 1926 the unions had a total membership of over 9 millions. Freedom of affiliation was gradually completed by a return to the system of voluntary payment of contributions, and this necessitated the complete re-organisation of the whole administrative and financial machinery of the unions. Three years were necessary to re-introduce order in this domain, special difficulties being encountered in accustoming the unions to depend only on the members' contributions.

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Although it is comparatively simple to follow the effects of trade union policy so far as the internal organisation of the unions is concerned, this is far from being the case when one comes to a study of the general trade union policy.

It is certain that during the first few months following the reforms of 1922, the trade union leaders successfully endeavoured to extract a number of promises from the Government authorities ; but it is as certain, when it came to realising these promises, that the position changed.

This change was most noticeable as regards wage questions. Although trade union leaders had succeeded in getting included in collective agreements special clauses relating to the payment of wages at fixed dates and had made efforts to guarantee wages against the depreciation of the currency, the economic organisations none the less continued to delay payments in order to reduce the real value of wages. Finding that their defensive tactics were of no avail and were only tending to aggravate and prolong the economic crisis, the trade unions ended by abandoning their claims for an increase in wages, which were still very low, and even by accepting a certain decrease in order to facilitate the financial reforms of 1924.

After the currency reform, when it became necessary to reconstitute the initial capital of industry which had undergone great depreciation during the war and the revolution, the trade unionists

allowed themselves once again to be convinced by the economic organisations that to increase production the workers had to make sacrifices and even to give up the hope of increased wages and certain privileges concerning labour protection and social insurance. A vigorous campaign in support of these ideas was undertaken and gave appreciable results. But soon, especially in 1925, a certain effervescence was to be observed among the working classes which, after the great efforts they had made, failed to find any improvement in their situation and believed themselves deceived by their leaders. This agitation gave rise to great uneasiness in trade union circles, which uneasiness became evident for the first time in a speech made by Andreev, one of the most influential persons in the trade union movement, to a plenary sitting of the Central Committee of the Railwaymen's Union held in March 1925.

This speech sounded a real note of warning, Andreev declaring bluntly that the moral position of the trade union movement was distinctly bad, that the workers were tired of paying contributions without receiving in return the right to express themselves on questions which closely concerned their welfare, that the unions would soon be permeated by discontent and that it was time to set their house in order, to call to order the trade union leaders who had again fallen into the habits of the Communist period, and, to put it briefly, to introduce the new trade union policy which had been promised in 1922.

A number of Andreev's prophecies were shortly afterwards realised. Numerous strikes were declared against the will of the unions and a growing dislike to pay contributions became evident among the workers. These events were accompanied by an increasing uneasiness among the trade union authorities. On 1 July 1925, Andreev, referring to his March speech, stated that "the greatest danger threatening trade unionism was the estrangement of the working classes from the workers' organisations".

This uneasiness led the Central Trade Union Council to send, on 18 July 1925, a long circular to the trade union organisations, asking them to modify their policy. During the following month the material and moral position of the trade union movement formed the subject of numerous discussions, which culminated in the resolution adopted by the Fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party held in December 1925.

The main purpose of these two documents — the circular of the Central Trade Union Council and the resolution of the Fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party — was to convince the trade union movement that, if it desired to regain the confidence of the workers, it must revert to the principles laid down in 1922 after the introduction of the NEP.

As a first step in this direction it was considered essential to re-awaken the workers' interest in trade union activities and, for this purpose, to tighten up the liaison between the masses and the trade union organs.

During 1926 great efforts were made to reform the trade union structure, especially the lower organs. At the last election of factory committees the staff of these institutions underwent considerable changes, Dogadov declaring at the Seventh Trade Union Congress held in December 1926 that 50-60 per cent. of the members of these committees had been changed. These changes do not appear, however, to have affected greatly the more active members of the committees. At least this is to be gathered from the remarks made by several speakers at the Seventh Congress, where Melnichansky strongly advised that " greater changes should be made in the ranks of the workers exempted from work ".

The trade unions are continually endeavouring to attract their members to the various committees which, in the undertakings, deal with questions concerning labour protection, educational propaganda, etc. According to Dogadov's report, these committees include about 642,000 members. Efforts are also being made to attract more workers to the general meetings, and good results have been achieved in this respect.

Nevertheless, according to Melnichansky's report to the Seventh Trade Union Congress, the great mass of the trade union members do not attend general meetings. It is stated that this is not so much because the agenda of the meetings are badly drawn up, but because the workers in many cases live from 10-15 versts from their work. Again, the workers are tired after their day's work and are deterred from going by the limited space in the meeting rooms. Meetings are too frequent, the agenda loaded with questions of little or no interest from a trade union standpoint, and " the individual criticism of workers on practical points arouses the impatience of the organisers " ¹.

¹ *Trood*, 17 Dec. 1926.

Bureaucratic methods are still far too common in the trade union administrations. " In our larger undertakings ", declares Melnichansky, " the factory committees are submerged under a mass of documents and are consequently unable to pay sufficient attention to what is going on in the workshops. Many presidents and secretaries are so absorbed in their office work that they never find time to put in even a brief appearance in the workshops or to speak to the workers. . . . Many of our organisations are entirely lacking in initiative and the officials are content to allow things to slide. Their chief occupation seems to be to ponder and re-ponder over instructions and regulations " ¹.

As has already been pointed out, the Communist principle of trade union organisation is based on the formula " one undertaking — one union ". The strict application of this principle has resulted in the grouping of most diverse classes of workers who belong to trades having no connection one with the other. Some unions are organised according to the character of production, others according to the aims of production, others according to the raw materials used, and still others according to the finished products manufactured. The chemical workers' union includes, besides chemical workers, all those engaged in the india-rubber industry, petroleum refineries, pottery and glass works, etc. The food and drink workers' union includes, in addition to those working in foodstuffs properly so-called, all persons engaged in tobacco factories, distilleries, the Astrakan fisheries, etc. The inclusion of such a diversity of trades in each union obviously makes the satisfaction of the economic and general requirements of the whole union a very difficult problem, and this is further accentuated by the fact that the members of the union are spread over vast territorial areas.

While not repudiating the principle of the " single union ", the leaders of the A.C.C.T.U. asked the Seventh Trade Union Congress to encourage the organisation of trade sections, which hitherto have always been considered as an evidence of individualistic tendencies and only suitable for the technical trades. These sections will not, of course, be considered as independent unions, and their sole object will be to ensure the provision of better information and improved measures of protection of the interests of the different groups of trade

¹ *Trood*, 17 Dec. 1926.

unionists employed in the various branches of the same category of production¹.

The proposals made by the A.C.C.T.U. at the Congress met with some opposition from certain trade unionists, who feared that they would result in a complete transformation of the present system of organisation. The leaders of the A.C.C.T.U. have endeavoured to dispel these fears, but the rôle and character of the proposed sections have not yet finally been determined. Tomsky admitted that although the formation of sections was likely to promote closer relations between the unions and the masses, it nevertheless tended to break up the unity of the organisations. At the same time, after considering the pros and cons, he decided in favour of the organisation of sections.

The second measure indicated in the circular of 1925 and the resolution of the Communist Party was the re-establishment of order in financial administration, as it was necessary to convince the members of the unions that their contributions were not being expended in a careless manner. Since then the financial position of the trade unions has greatly improved, administrative expenses have decreased, and the unions are now in a position to earmark a part of their income to strengthening the special funds devoted to employment, educational work, etc. Nowadays the A.C.C.T.U. manages to cover its expenditure with the percentage of the contributions received from the central committees, and on the other hand it is no longer required to provide subsidies for provincial organisations, except in the case of several of the smaller federated republics. The situation might even be described as normal were it not for the frequent cases of maladministration of financial resources. Both Tomsky and Dogadov laid great emphasis on this point at the Seventh Trade Union Congress, when it was pointed out that during a period of six months in 1925 the known cases of fraudulent misappropriation of funds amounted to over half-a-million roubles.

The third measure proposed in 1925 related to the protection of workers' interests by the trade unions, and it is in this respect that the unions have been found most wanting. Nowadays, however, the members of factory committees are rarely accused of arrogance,

¹ TOMSKY'S report to the Seventh Congress, *Trood*, 8 Dec. 1926; and MELNICHANSKY'S thesis, *ibid.*, 26 Nov. 1926.

the chief complaints made against the committees being a want of initiative and indifference to the demands of the workers.

According to statements made by Andreev to the Seventh Conference, business relations between the trade unions and the State economic organisations are not what they ought to be. In the first place there is constant friction between them on the subject of the contractual regulation of conditions of labour which arises from "the fact that industry is run on commercial lines". Nor are the trade unions solely to blame for this situation, as the economic authorities often "give proof of a false conception and inadequate comprehension of their real functions in the proletarian State". "They judge labour matters from a false standpoint, are casual in their consideration of wage questions, and entirely forget that it is their duty not only to make the undertakings pay but also to obtain certain material guarantees for the workers." Andreev's statements were borne out by a number of trade unionists attending the Congress. According to them, the economists act as if all measures of economy should fall on the shoulders of the workers, and make every endeavour to deprive the workers of their privileges in regard to labour protection, housing, wages, education, etc.¹

Another anomaly mentioned by Andreev was that the economists often appear completely ignorant of the trade unions' right to participate in the economic management of the undertakings and some of them pay no attention to the "conferences on production." Frequent disputes arise because the legitimate demands of the unions are passed over in silence. In certain cases, although admitting the fairness of the workers' claims, they prefer to submit the matter to arbitration in order to be able to say that they gave way only before a legal decision. Frequently the economic authorities refuse to include in their plan of production measures required to guarantee industrial safety². "The economic authorities", declared Andreev, "consider that the interference of the trade unions prevents them from organising the undertakings on a normal basis." In their eyes the workers' participation in the construction of a Socialist State is merely a formula of propaganda.

On the other hand, the trade union leaders have a very vague

¹ *Trood*, 14-15 Dec. 1926.

² Statement made by the representative of the Inter-Trade Union Council of the Urals to the Seventh Trade Union Congress, *Trood*, 14 Dec. 1926.

idea of the relations which should exist between them and the economic organs. "The trade unions and some of their leaders often have a false conception of the economic duties incumbent on the working classes. This leads them into adopting narrow-sighted views which prevent them from combining the interests of the union with the general interests of the working classes." According to Andreev, this is explained by the fact that "certain trade unions and their leaders forget that their duty in the proletarian State is not merely to protect the workers' interests, but also to help directly in building up the Socialist regime".

Latterly, the trade unions have found themselves faced by a rather delicate question, namely, that of defining their attitude in private undertakings and in concessions. In undertakings of this class the number of workers affiliated to trade unions has in recent years shown a tendency to increase, being 198,915 in April 1925 and 207,189 on 1 April 1926¹. In conceded undertakings only 12 per cent. of the foreign workers are trade unionists, and this percentage is considered unsatisfactory in trade union circles. In general the mass of the workers in the undertakings is still "impotent, ignorant, and oppressed". The workers are afraid to expose their conditions of labour to the representatives of the union and avoid giving any information as regards the amount of wages earned, the length of the working day, contraventions of collective agreements, etc.²

The employer, moreover, has managed to get the workers into his power by instilling into them his own ideas and by advancing them wages and loans. The worker, perpetually in debt, is entirely dependent on his employer, whom he considers as a sort of benefactor who helps him when necessary and whom he supports against the unions³. Again, owners of private undertakings make every endeavour to satisfy their workers by loyally carrying out their obligations and according them certain privileges. In these undertakings labour protection and social insurance measures work well. The contractors regularly provide working clothes and supplementary rations, pay their insurance contributions, and often grant holidays in excess of the two weeks legally prescribed. On the whole, the premises are generally in good condition⁴.

¹ Report by DOGADOV, *Trood*, 9 Dec. 1926.

² BELKIN in the *Labour Messenger*, 1926, No. 11.

³ *Idem*.

⁴ *Trade Union Activity in Private Enterprises*, p. 23. Published by the Moscow Inter-Trade Union Council, 1926.

According to certain statements it would appear that the trade union delegates do not always escape from the influence of the employer. "It is common knowledge that many representatives of the minor trade union organs receive a gratuity from the employer for their trade union activity, in addition to the sums provided by the employer, in accordance with the terms of the collective agreement, for the maintenance of the factory committee¹

It sometimes happens that the unions do not afford sufficient protection to the workers and that they have not sufficient authority to prevent the dismissal of the more active militant workers. Again, trade union representatives often fail to take action against the most crying infringements of the regulations relating to protection of labour and collective agreements. Moreover, as Dogadov pointed out to the Seventh Congress, many organisations confound the duties of the unions in State undertakings and private concerns. They busy themselves with efforts to improve the general situation, organise conferences on production, convene meetings with the employer to find methods to improve the working of the undertaking, etc. In concessions the contrary is to be observed. There the unions take too many liberties with the employer, whom they consider as a class enemy.

Faced with these facts the A.C.C.T.U. published, on the eve of the Seventh Congress (3 December 1926), a circular letter² recommending the factory committees "in view of the inadequacy of trade union action in privately-owned undertakings, to cease all attempts to collaborate with the managements". "It should be remembered that the owner of a private undertaking is entitled to manage his concern and that in this case the interests of an employer are opposed to those of the workers . . . In all relations between trade unions and private owners or concessionnaires a strictly formal and practical attitude must be maintained." The trade unions and factory committees must resist all attempts by employers to create disunion among the workers by granting them certain privileges. "The evil that results from the acceptance of favours from the employers must be explained to the workers whenever a case arises, and the workers should be brought to realise the desire for gain which is the real motive of such favours." The A.C.C.T.U. also advised the trade union organisations to combat all attempts by employers to sap the authority

¹ *Idem.*

² *Trood*, 3 Dec. 1926.

of the minor trade union bodies, to destroy trade union discipline, and to deaden class consciousness.

Finally, 'as regards concessions, the circular went on to say that it was in the interests of the workers and the Soviet State to attract foreign capital into the Soviet Union, as far as this was possible and compatible with the general policy of the State. " For this reason the trade unions ought not to make claims which might lead to the closing of private undertakings. In no case are the unions to endeavour to prevent the concessionnaire from making improvements in the plant of lay out, even when such improvements result in a reduction in the number of workers employed in the undertaking. "

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What is the actual position of the trade union movement in Russia at the present day ?

The improvement in the economic situation of the country has resulted in a considerable increase in the total number of wage earners, which now approaches 10 millions (9,808,000). In July 1926 the number of persons affiliated to the trade unions, including 1,200,000 unemployed, was 9,278,000, these being grouped in 23 national unions, several of which have over a million members. During the last two years important changes in the composition of the working masses have taken place and these have been reflected in the composition of the various unions. Between 1 April 1924 and 1 April 1926, the number of industrial workers affiliated to trade unions increased by 43 per cent., the increases for the various trades being 152 per cent. in the building industry, 209 per cent. for agricultural workers, 22 per cent. for employees in the transport and postal services, 47 per cent. for commercial employees, and 73 per cent. for civil servants and intellectual workers. The relative importance of these trades in the whole body of trade unionists has varied as follows ¹ :

	1 April 1924 Per cent. from 38.2	1 April 1926 Per cent. to 36.3
Industry	„ 19.9	„ 16.1
Transport and postal services	„ 3.6	„ 6.1
Building	„ 5.1	„ 10.5
Agriculture	„ 16.1	„ 18.6
Intellectual workers		

¹ " Labour in the U.S.S.R. " *Statistical Year-Book for 1924-1925*, Moscow, 1926 ; *Labour Statistics*, 1926, Nos. 7-8.

It is certain that the trade unions have recently absorbed a number of new elements, and the increase in the membership of the various unions undoubtedly reflects the changes which have taken place in the economic situation of the country. The boom in the building industry has drawn a large number of workers into the towns, and the membership of the building workers' union has increased from 202,000 in 1923-1924 to 489,000 in 1925-1926, or by 142 per cent. The growth of commerce and of the State commercial administrations has increased the membership of the commercial workers' organisations from 380,000 in 1923-1924 to 642,000 in 1925-1926 or by 68 per cent., while as a result of the development of agriculture, the agricultural workers' unions have increased their membership from 1,300,000 in 1923-1924 to 1,700,000 in 1925-1926, or by 30 per cent.¹

Economic conditions reigning at present in the provinces are forcing country workers to seek employment in the towns. Among the labour newly enrolled in industry during 1925-1926 the proportion of country workers was 7-8 per cent. in Moscow and Leningrad, 12-16 per cent. in the chief departmental towns of the R.S.F.S.R., and from 51-69 per cent. in the Ukraine. Among the unemployed the proportion of country workers varied from 16.7 in December 1925 to 32.3 per cent. in May 1926².

Thus, to the mass of industrial workers belonging to trade unions is being added a large number of non-industrial workers. Attention has been drawn to this fact by the opposition in the Communist Party (the group Zinoviev, Kameneff, Trotsky) who state that the unions include a large proportion of semi-proletarian and non-proletarian elements whose psychology and political outlook are having a great influence on trade union policy and even deviating it into middle-class conceptions. At the Fifteenth Conference of the Communist Party (November 1926) Tomsky denied these allegations, pointing out that the industrial element in the unions represented 53.1 per cent. of the total and the transport workers another 14.9 per cent. The unions of salaried employees and similar occupations do not include more than 32 per cent. of the total.

¹ According to an article on "Economic Prospects for 1926-1927", published in *Rational Economy*, 1926, No. 8. The number of agricultural workers given for 1925-1926 is much too small. It is considered that their number reached about 3 1/2 millions during 1926.

² MINZ : "Migration of Peasants in Search of Work." *Economicheskaya Zhizn*, 4 Aug. 1926.

Tomsky added that it would be absurd to consider as middle-class elements salaried employees who earned less than 80 roubles a month and who formed 73 per cent. of the total of the salaried employees in the towns and 99.5 per cent. of those in the provinces.

Nevertheless, Tomsky and Melnichansky admitted at the Seventh Congress, that the new elements joining the trade union ranks were very different from the old workers. Many of these members are " persons who have no conception of what the Soviet State really is, whose only desire is to earn as much as they can, in order to satisfy the needs of their families which they have left in the country, and who make no distinction between a Soviet undertaking and a private concern ". The trade union for them is merely a means to obtain good remuneration for their work, and they are opposed to all effort which does not lead to the immediate improvement of their material situation.

According to the writer Seniushkin, the workers coming from the country are entirely devoid of all class consciousness. For them the factory is a temporary, casual means of earning their living, and they still remain attached to the land, while their psychology is quite different from that of the regular industrial worker. It is to be feared, adds Seniushkin, that in the ranks of the working classes will be formed two groups which have neither the same requirements nor the same mentality, and that this will undermine the unity, cohesion and power of the working classes ¹.

According to Melnichansky, the greatest obstacle to the spread of trade unionism among the masses is the instability which results from unemployment and the large number of persons constantly being engaged or dismissed. " The trade union membership book is often merely a sort of decoy, which is bought and sold. We know of cases where peasants, after joining an agricultural or wood workers' union, go back to the country and return no more to the town, preferring to send in their place some rustic to whom they have given or sold their membership book." ²

Thus, it is seen that the difficulties which face the trade unions become ever more numerous with the extension of the movement. The position of the unions becomes even more difficult when they attempt to combine their rôle of protector of the working-class interests

¹ SENIUSHKIN : " Educational Work under Present Conditions ", Labour Messenger, 1926, No. 1, p. 64.

² Report to the Seventh Congress, *Trood*, 17 Dec. 1926.

with their economic function in connection with the reconstruction of industry and the speeding up of production. Then it is that hard facts often force them to relinquish a part of their plans, and this has been especially marked in connection with questions regarding wages, social insurance, the regulation of the labour market, collective agreements, etc. Having to satisfy both the workers' demands and the requirements of the State, their position is by no means an easy one.

In order to escape from these conflicting interests which handicap their activity, the trade unions nowadays appear anxious to obtain greater freedom of action. Evidence of this desire is to be found in certain proposals which have recently been made regarding the internal organisation of the movement. In this connection it has been suggested by Mr. Kroll, President of the Food and Drink Workers Union, that the Central Trade Union Council should confine itself to making recommendations to the various unions, such recommendations to be examined by the Central Committee or the Congress of the union in question, before actually being brought into operation. Tomsky is, however, opposed to this suggestion, which "in view of the existence of central trade union organs in the various federated States, smacks too much of a return to federalism in trade union matters."

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* *

It is in a matter of internal organisation that must be seen the characteristic which separates the Russian trade union movement from similar movements in other countries. The term trade unionism, with the idea of individual freedom and consent which it suggests, serves very inadequately to describe the grouping of the workers, as understood by the leaders of the Russian trade union movement.

Every wage earner, says the Soviet legislation, is entitled to be represented by a trade union organ, and State intervention in the movement stops here. At the same time, workers who desire to unite to form a union are not free to do so outside the structure of the existing movement, that is to say, the Communist movement. If a union, on formation, does not meet with the approval of the higher authorities, it is refused the title of trade union and all the privileges attached to such organisations. In practice, the policy of exclusiveness is even more complete than is suggested, for not only is the worker not free to choose the union he joins — this being decided for him by the undertaking by which he is employed — but he has no option but to join it.

Having made this fundamental point, the State grants the unions far greater prerogatives than those received by trade unions in other countries. In social affairs, without actually possessing legislative powers, the unions play a predominant part ¹, while in economic matters, although they no longer hold the guiding reins, they must be, and insist on, being consulted. In exchange for these privileges, the State, or rather the party in power, counts on them to govern the working masses and to lead them to work in harmony with society as a whole. The unions may be, and are required, to deal with all matters concerning conditions of labour, and it is this idea which determines the part played by them in the Soviet State.

In this connection Tomsky made, on 11 August 1926, to the German workers delegation certain statements of the greatest interest :

As for independence, our unions are certainly independent of the State; at the same time, they naturally depend on the State, just as the State depends on them. Formally the unions were completely independent. With the exception of laws which apply to the whole nation, no instructions issued by the Government are obligatory for them. *The trade unions of the U.S.S.R. are not subordinate departments of the State organs ; but between them and the State there is certainly an interdependence.* The nature of this relationship is such that, as power is concentrated in the hands of the working classes, the activity of the unions reacts as much on the State as it does on the unions themselves. In this manner neither the Council of People's Commissaries nor the Central Executive Committee can take decisions concerning the welfare of the workers, conditions of labour, wages, etc., without the approval of the unions. By a simple telephone call we are able to get withdrawn from the agenda of any high State organ any question which has not already been approved by the trade unions. Every member of the Bureau of the A.C.C.T.U. has a consultative vote in the Council of People's Commissaries. . . .

To understand clearly the meaning of these statements, it is necessary constantly to bear in mind that the power of the working classes of which Tomsky speaks is held in Russia by the Communist Party. The consequence is that the unions are actually in the hands of the Communist Party and are used by it to bolster up the State.

At the Seventh Trade Union Congress this point was clearly defined by Tomsky, who stated : " We do not conceal from anyone that the trade union movement has been, is, and will be, directed by the Communist Party in the most centralised fashion."

¹ The official publication on labour legislation, *Information of the Commissariat of Labour*, devotes a large part of its text to circulars and instructions of the A.C.C.T.U.

But it should not be thought that the management of the unions by the Communists is absolute and leaves no power of initiative to trade union members as a whole. In this connection the resolutions of the Fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party, which were confirmed by the Fifteenth Congress, recommended that "there should be no meddling interference by the party organs in the daily activities of the trade union organisations". The party organs were asked to remember that "the trade unions are large groups of workers, mostly without political opinions, whose activity can only be efficacious if methods of persuasion are used towards them . . . It is especially as regards the unions that we must refrain from methods of dictation or domination".

To sum up, although the idea of trade union freedom was practically abolished during the Communist period, it has shown a distinct tendency to revive during the last few years. We use the word "idea" because, in the first place, trade union liberty depends entirely on the leaders, who are, to all intents and purposes, chosen by the Communist Party, and, secondly, because, as a result of labour being abundant and the workers virtually obliged to join the unions in order to obtain the privileges attached to membership, individual liberty, and hence trade union liberty, is still greatly restricted.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

SOURCES

A list of the principal Russian publications on the trade union movement which have been used in the present study is given below. The list also includes a number of other works translated from the Russian and published outside Russia.

Only the more important sources of information relative to conditions of labour have been mentioned, and then generally in footnotes, but information published by the International Labour Office on Russia is given in a separate list.

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¹ The Seventh Congress took place in December 1926. The Minutes have, up to the present, only been published in *Trood*, the daily organ of the A.C.C.T.U.

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1923

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APPENDIX II

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE TRADE UNIONS ACCORDING TO THE LABOUR CODE (1922)

(1) Special Section

XV. — TRADE UNIONS (PRODUCTIVE UNIONS) OF WAGE-EARNING AND SALARIED EMPLOYEES, AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVE BODIES IN UNDERTAKINGS, INSTITUTIONS, AND ENTERPRISES

151. The trade unions (productive unions) in which citizens employed for remuneration in State, public, and private undertakings, institutions, and enterprises are organised may appear before the various authorities in the name of wage earners as parties to collective agreements and may represent them in all matters relating to work and conditions of life.

152. The trade unions (productive unions) organised in accordance with the principles drawn up by the competent congresses of these bodies shall not be liable to registration by State offices as prescribed for associations and unions in general, but shall be registered with the central inter-trade union federations to which they are affiliated in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions.

153. Other associations not registered with central inter-trade union federations under section 152 shall not be entitled to style themselves trade unions (productive unions) nor to claim the rights of such unions.

(a) to acquire and manage property ;

(b) to conclude contracts, agreements, etc., of all kinds, under the legislation in force.

154. Trade unions (productive unions) shall be entitled :

Note. — All the rights possessed by trade unions (productive unions) shall also be possessed by their central federations.

155. Under Article 16 of the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R., all State authorities shall be bound to afford trade unions (productive unions) and federations thereof all requisite assistance by furnishing them with properly equipped buildings for the establishment of labour palaces and union offices, and affording them privileges in connection with the use of the postal, telegraph, telephone, railway and water transport services.

156. The principal body representing the trade unions in undertakings, institutions, and enterprises shall be the committee of wage-earning and salaried employees (factory, mining, building, local, etc.,

committee) or an authorised delegate of the union instead of the committee.

Note 1. — The procedure for the election of the employees' committee in each undertaking, institution or enterprise shall be laid down by the competent trade union (productive union).

Note 2. — The organisation and procedure of the committees of wage-earning and salaried employees in the military and naval departments shall be governed by a Special Order issued by the Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic and the A.C.C.T.U.

157. No other committee than that established by section 156 of this Code and approved by the competent trade union (productive union) shall have the rights specified in sections 158 to 160.

158. The duties of the committee (section 156) shall be as follows :—

- (a) It shall safeguard the interests of the wage-earning and salaried employees which it represents in relation to the management of the undertaking, institution, or enterprise, in respect of matters connected with the employment and conditions of life of employees ;
- (b) It shall represent the employees before the Government and other public authorities ;
- (c) It shall see that the legislative provisions concerning the protection of workers, social insurance, the payment of wages, and the regulations for hygiene and the prevention of accidents, etc., are faithfully carried out by the management of the undertaking, institution, or enterprise, and shall co-operate with the State authorities concerned with the protection of the workers ;
- (d) It shall take steps to improve the social and material situation of wage-earning and salaried employees ;
- (e) It shall co-operate in the regular carrying on of production in State undertakings, and participate in the regulation and organisation of economic activities through the competent trade unions (productive unions).

159. The management shall be notified of the election of the committee and of the fact that it has entered upon its duties. The number of members of the committee of wage-earning and salaried employees who shall be exempt from their regular work for the purpose of transacting the business of the committee shall be fixed in accordance with the following rules :

Members shall be set free for the whole duration of the hours of work as follows :

If the undertaking, institution or enterprise employs not more than 300 persons, one member ;

If it employs more than 300 but not more than 1,000 persons, two members ;

If it employs more than 1,000 but not more than 5,000 persons, three members ;

If it employs more than 5,000 persons, five members.

Members of the committee shall be released from work by the management in pursuance of a resolution of the committee.

160. The members of the committee who are released for regular work on behalf of the committee shall receive remuneration corresponding to their qualifications, and not less in any case than the appropriate scheduled rate.

Members of the committee released from work shall be ensured further employment, on the expiration of their term of office, in the undertaking, institution, or enterprise, on the basis of the contract of employment in force immediately before their election and the modifications of this contract effected during their work with the committee.

Members of the committee shall not be dismissed from work without the approval of the competent trade union (productive union), without prejudice to the observance of the general regulations for the rescinding of the contract of work (sections 44 and 47).

161. The management of the undertaking, institution or enterprise shall not hinder the activities of the committees and the union meetings entitled to elect them (general or delegate meetings) ; in this connection the following rules shall be observed :

- (a) General and delegate meetings shall be held as a rule outside working hours ; they may be held during working hours if the meeting exercises State functions (elections to the council of workers' and peasants' delegates or to social insurance institutions), or in case of the election of representatives to the Congress of Trade Union Federations ; in other exceptional cases they shall be so held only by agreement with the management. The same provisions shall apply to workshop meetings ;
- (b) The sessions of the committee shall likewise be held outside working hours as a rule ; full meetings of the committee shall be held during working hours only in exceptional cases and with the consent of the management ;
- (c) The management shall notify the committee within three days of every engagement of a wage-earning or salaried employee, and also of contemplated dismissals.

162. The moneys required to defray the expenses of the wage-earning and salaried employees' committee shall be furnished by the management of the undertaking, institution or enterprise on the basis of an estimate approved by the competent trade union, provided that they shall not exceed 2 per cent. of the total remuneration of the wage-earning and salaried employees of the undertaking, institution or enterprise.

163. The sums mentioned in section 162 shall be used by the committee in accordance with regulations drawn up by the competent trade union, and exclusively for the purposes for which they are destined.

164. The trade unions (productive unions) may require the management of the undertaking, institution, or enterprise to pay at the proper time the moneys requisite to defray the expenses of the committee, and may exercise proper supervision over their receipts and expenditure.

165. The management of the undertaking, institution or enterprise shall grant the committee the use of a room free of charge, with the necessary equipment, heating and lighting, both for the business of the committee itself and for general and delegate meetings ; access to this room shall be free to all persons on the business of the committee.

166. The members of the executive of the trade unions, their authorised representatives for special duties, and the members of the committee (sections 151 and 156) shall have unrestricted right of entry to all workshops, departments, laboratories, etc., of an undertaking, institution, or enterprise.

167. Any contravention of the provisions issued in Chapter XV of this Code respecting trade unions (productive unions) of wage-earning and salaried employees and their representative bodies in undertakings, institutions, and enterprises shall be punished in accordance with section 134 of the Penal Code of the R.S.F.S.R.

(2) Special Sections

I. — GENERAL PROVISIONS

1 (*Supplement*). — A list of seasonal occupations shall be drawn up by the competent services and approved by the Federal Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U. When local conditions require it, supplementary lists shall be drawn up by the competent local services and approved by the national commissariats of labour in agreement with the national corresponding trade union councils. . . .

. . . . In exceptional cases . . . hours of work may be prolonged by an agreement between the employer and the trade union concerned. . . . A list of occupations for which it is permissible to prolong the hours of work shall be drawn up by the Federal Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U. . . .

. . . . The employer shall not be obliged to pay the wages of a worker who absents himself from work to attend a congress, conference, or meeting convened by a trade union organisation.

IV. — COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

15. Collective agreements shall mean agreements concluded between a trade union (sections 152 and 153) as representative of the wage-earning and salaried employees, on the one hand, and an employer, on the other.

16. The terms of the collective agreement shall apply to all persons employed in a specified undertaking or institution, irrespective of whether they are members of the trade union which has concluded the contract or not.

18. The period for which a collective agreement may be concluded shall be fixed by the Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U.

V — CONTRACT OF WORK

Note 2. — In the event of the termination of a contract with an employee who is a member of the factory committee or of any other similar body, the provisions of section 160 of this Code shall be observed.

49. Every contract of work may also be terminated on the demand of the trade union. If the head of the undertaking fails to agree with the claims of the union, an appeal may be lodged by him in accordance with the customary procedure in cases of dispute.

VI. — RULES OF EMPLOYMENT

The rules of employment . . . shall be drawn up by agreement between the management of the undertaking and the local branches of the trade unions concerned

55. The rules of employment for particular branches of industry and economic activity, central institutions or undertakings, groups of undertakings directly connected with one another, and undertakings and institutions of special national importance, may be drawn up by agreement between the central committee of trade unions concerned and the management, at the central offices, and approved by the Commissariat of Labour.

VII. — STANDARDS OF OUTPUT

56. Standards of output shall be fixed by the management of the undertaking or institution in agreement with the trade union or competent officials of the trade union (sections 151 and 156).

VIII. — REMUNERATION OF LABOUR

If the rates for time worked are changed, the prices for piecework shall be changed proportionately.

Note. — Work begun in any establishment before a change in piecework prices, shall be paid for at the rates fixed by the assessment and disputes committee, or in default of such committee, rates fixed by agreement with the competent trade union, or, in case of failure to arrive at an agreement, rates fixed in accordance with the procedure customary in case of dispute.

IX. — GUARANTEES AND COMPENSATION

79. A wage-earning or salaried employee who has been appointed as a representative to attend a congress, conference, or delegates' meeting convened by a State authority, trade association, or special consumers' co-operative society shall receive his average earnings during the whole time spent in the discharge of the duties imposed upon him, in so far as this falls within working hours.

91. If the undertaking or institution, with the approval of the assessment and disputes committee, or in default thereof the competent trade union, grants no ordinary leave (section 114) or extra leave (section 116), the wage-earning or salaried employee shall be entitled to compensation in cash reckoned according to the amount of his average earnings at the time when the compensation was authorised.

X. — HOURS OF WORK

94. . . .

Note. — The Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U. may specify the groups of responsible workers in

political, trade union and council offices whose work shall not be subject to the restriction of hours specified in section 94.

99. . . .

Note. — Exceptions to the provisions of section 99 may be authorised in undertakings of special kinds, but only with the consent of the competent trade union and the approval of the representative of the Commissariat of Labour.

104. . . .

Note. — It shall be permissible to work overtime in the cases mentioned in this section only in pursuance of a resolution of the local assessment and disputes committee, or, in default thereof, with the consent of the competent trade union.

106. . . .

Note. — In special branches of economic activity which are of a seasonal character, the number of hours overtime may be increased beyond the limit mentioned in section 106 by the Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U.

XI. — REST PERIODS

109. . . . Weekly rest days shall be fixed by the local labour sections in agreement with the trade union councils.

112. The labour sections, in agreement with the provincial inter-trade union councils, may fix not more than ten special rest days in the year in addition to those specified in section 111.

Note. — The Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U. may draw up lists of the undertakings and institutions in which work must, from its nature, be carried on uninterruptedly on any of the rest days and festivals mentioned in the foregoing section.

XII. — APPRENTICESHIP

122. The period of apprenticeship shall be fixed for the various occupations by the Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U. and the Commissariat of Education. . . .

123. The number of apprentices . . . shall not in any case be less than the number fixed by the Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U. and the central economic authorities for the branch of industry in question.

XIII. — WORK OF WOMEN AND YOUNG PERSONS

129. . . .

A list of specially heavy and unhealthy occupations shall be issued by the Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U.

130. . . .

Note. — The Commissariat of Labour, in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U., may authorise the employment at night of adult women in branches of industry in which it is absolutely necessary.

135.

Note. — This labour inspector shall be entitled to give permission in exceptional cases for the engagement of young persons who have attained the age of fourteen years, in accordance with special regulations issued by the Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.T.T.U.

137. The minimum number of minors to be employed in the various branches of industry shall be fixed for each industry by the Commissariat of Labour in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U.

XIV. — PROTECTION OF WORKERS

144. The Commissariat of Labour, in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U., may prohibit night work in undertakings where it is not absolutely necessary or where it is especially prejudicial to the employees' health.

147. The labour inspector shall be appointed for a specified period by the inter-trade union councils, and the appointments shall be ratified by the Commissariat of Labour.

XVI. — ORGANISATIONS FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES AND INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS RESPECTING CONTRAVENTIONS OF LABOUR LAWS

169. The sessions of the people's courts shall be attended by a people's judge, who shall preside, and two members of the court, viz., one representative of the Commissariat of Labour and one representative of the trade unions.

171¹. . . .

In the event of a dispute arising in a State institution or undertaking, on the demand of one or other of the parties an arbitration court may be appointed by the Commissariat of Labour and the trade union concerned, and both parties are bound to accept its findings.

174. . . .

The decisions of the arbitration courts, in so far as they concern the workers, shall be carried out by the trade unions.

¹ Revised according to Act of 27 Sept. 1926. (*Collection of Laws, 1926, No. 64.*)

APPENDIX III

MODEL CONSTITUTION OF AN ALL-RUSSIAN INDUSTRIAL TRADE UNION¹

PURPOSES AND AIMS OF THE UNION

1. Basing itself on the principle of international class warfare, the All-Russian Union of Wage Earners and Salaried Employees . . .², which unites the working masses and trains them to build up the Socialist State, proposes to bring Socialism into being through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

2. During the period of social development and construction, the principal duties of the All-Russian Trade Union shall be as follows :

- (a) To participate in the organisation and regulation of the economic life of the country, in the census and distribution of labour, in the improvement of labour output, etc
- (b) To improve the economic and material situation of its members by establishing for the whole territory of Russia wage rates and hours of work, by promoting measures for the improvement of labour protection and social insurance, and by making a study of the conditions of labour and existence of the workers.
- (c) To raise the level of education and class consciousness among its members.
- (d) To represent and protect the interests of its members in the diverse State and public organisations and institutions.

3. To achieve these aims the All-Russian Trade Union of Wage Earners and Salaried Employees, repudiating all forms of trade union organisation based on consideration of a purely vocational, national, or denominational character, shall endeavour to unite all workers, irrespective of their political and religious convictions, in a single universal producers' union, subjecting all its members to trade union and proletarian labour discipline.

COMPOSITION OF THE UNION

4. The All-Russian Union shall include all wage earners and salaried employees regularly employed in . . . who take part in the processes of production, or who contribute directly thereto.

¹ Approved by the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, 1919

² Name of branch of industry represented by the union to be put here.

Note. — Persons employed in the service not of actual production but of the producers, or who are engaged in temporary or casual work, may not be admitted to membership of the All-Russian Union and shall remain members of their own union.

5. On the decision of a general or delegates' assembly, all wage earners and salaried employees in a given undertaking shall be obliged to form part of the union.

6. Persons who personally possess the right to engage, dismiss, reprimand, etc., may not be members of the union.

7. Home workers (*kustari*), small employers, and non-salaried members of the so-called liberal professions may not be members of the union.

8. On joining an undertaking . . . members of trade unions affiliated to the A.C.C.T.U. shall automatically become members of the union without payment of an entrance fee, and shall enjoy all the privileges attached to such membership.

Note. — On joining a union, members are required to send in their resignation to their former union.

9. Simultaneous affiliation to two or more unions is strictly forbidden.

MEMBERS' RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

10. All members of the union of at least 17 years of age shall have a right to vote or be voted for at the election of candidates to any responsible post.

Note. — Trade union members under 17 years of age have only the right to vote ; they are not eligible for election.

11. All members shall pay their membership contribution and shall conform strictly to the constitution of the union and to all rules and regulations issued by the trade union authorities.

12. Members contravening the constitution or the instructions of the union, or who oppose their application, or who do not obey proletarian discipline, shall be excluded from the union.

13. Members expelled from the union on account of misconduct shall also be dismissed from the undertaking concerned for a fixed period, which shall be determined by the union.

TRADE UNION STRUCTURE

14. The All-Russian Union . . . shall include all wage earners and salaried employees . . . The primary trade union organ shall be the factory committee (or committee of employees).

Note. — There may not be more than one factory committee (or committee of employees) in each undertaking.

15. All factory committees (committees of employees) in a given locality shall be attached to the local, urban or district subsection of the All-Russian Union . . . , the subsection being elected by an assembly of delegates from the unions in the various undertakings.

16. The local, urban or district subsections shall direct all trade union work relating to the undertakings in the locality in accordance with the directions of the central committee.

17. With a view to the co-ordination of their activities and the realisation of a uniform trade union policy, the local, urban and district subsections representing a given branch of industry shall in their turn be attached to a section of the All-Russian Union, which shall be elected by the representatives of the subsections : according to circumstances this section may be a departmental or an area section.

18. The departmental or area sections shall be directly subordinate to the central committee of the All-Russian Union. . . .

19. For the management of current trade union business the local, urban and district subsections and the departmental or area sections shall elect from among their members a management board and the executive committee of such board.

20. In order to guarantee rapid and regular communication between the subsections and sections, and between the sections and the central committee, each subsection or section may correspond directly with the central committee, and vice versa.

21. The supreme organ of the All-Russian Union . . . shall be the All-Russian Congress, or, during the interval between congresses, the central committee.

22. The All-Russian Congress shall authorise the central committee of the union to deal with all matters arising between the congresses : the decisions of the central committee, in so far as they are not contradictory to the instructions of the A.C.C.T.U., shall therefore be binding for all subsections and sections, as well as for their members.

23. For the management of current business, a general assembly of the central committee shall elect from among its members an executive committee (or presidium) composed of a president, assessors and a secretary.

24. The central committee shall convene a congress at least once a year, and shall render an account of its activities to the said congress.

25. For the decision of questions of fundamental importance which it considers to be beyond its competence, the central committee may convene a conference, but may not do so more than twice a year.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

26. The funds of the union shall be composed of entrance fees, monthly contributions of members, and special deductions from wages.

27. The entrance fee shall be fixed uniformly for all members, irrespective of their place of residence, at one-half of a day's wages.

28. The member's monthly contribution shall be equivalent to one-hundredth part of his monthly wage.

29. All regular, temporary and special deductions from wages which form a part of the financial resources of the union shall be divided as follows : 50 per cent. to the central committee of the All-Russian Union and 50 per cent. to the departmental and area sections.

30. The lower trade union organs shall receive the funds necessary for the conduct of their affairs conformably with the budget drawn up by the management board of the local subsection of the All-Russian Union.

Note. — The budgets of factory committees (committees of employees) may in no case exceed the amount laid down for them by law.

31. The local, urban and district subsections of the All-Russian Union . . . shall submit details of all proposed expenditure for the approval of the departmental or area sections from which they draw their funds.

FINANCIAL CONTROL

32. For the financial control of the All-Russian Union (funds, books, auditing of accounts, and budgets) the All-Russian Congress shall appoint for the period of one year an auditing committee, which shall include five members and three substitute members.

33. For the financial control of the departmental and area sections and local, urban and district subsections, the assembly corresponding to the organisation in question shall appoint for a period of one year a committee composed of three members and two substitute members.

Note. — Persons already holding an elective or paid position in the organisation in question may not be members of an auditing committee.

34. The All-Russian Control Committee shall submit a report on its work to the All-Russian Congress of the union. A special congress may be convened on evidence of maladministration by the central committee.

35. Identical measures shall be taken by the auditive committees of the sections and subsections of the All-Russian Union.

36. All auditive committees are entitled to make an audit when they consider it necessary, and when they are requested to do so by a Conference or by a written demand signed by at least 10 per cent. of the members of the union

DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION

37. The union may be dissolved only on the decision of an ordinary or extraordinary congress, in which case the congress shall nominate a committee to liquidate the affairs of the union.

APPENDIX IV

CONSTITUTION OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS (A.C.C.T.U) ¹

1. In the interval between two All-Russian Trade Union Congresses the supreme management body of the trade union movement of the R.S.F.S.R. shall be the A.C.C.T.U.

2. The duties of the A.C.C.T.U, which shall base its action on decisions taken by the Congresses, shall be as follows :

- (a) to govern the whole trade union movement in Russia in accordance with the decisions taken by the Congress and to direct the activity of the all-Russian trade union and inter-trade union federations ;
- (b) to encourage the development of the trade union movement by written and oral propaganda ,
- (c) to take part in the international workers' movement through its delegation to the " Red " Trade Union International ;
- (d) to carry out the work necessary for the preparation and convening of All-Russian Congresses ;
- (e) to fix the date for the convening of Conference and Congresses.

3. The A.C.C.T.U. :

- (a) shall represent the proletariat organised in the trade unions in all State and public organisations and institutions ;
- (b) shall draw up all draft laws for the protection of the material and moral interests of the trade unionists, and shall endeavour to have these laws adopted by the competent official departments.

4. The orders and instructions issued by the A.C.C.T.U. shall be binding for all federations. If any organisation contravenes these orders and instructions the A.C.C.T.U. shall adopt measures of compulsion which may extend from individual dispossession to collective dissolution.

5. The budget of the A.C.C.T.U. shall consist of :

- (a) ten per cent. of the contributions received by the central trade union committees ;
- (b) various receipts.

6. The A.C.C.T.U. shall convene an All-Russian Trade Union Congress once a year. It shall also be entitled to convene an Extra-

¹ This Constitution was adopted by the Fifth Trade Union Congress (1922). The word "All-Russian" was replaced by "Federal" (inclusive of the whole Soviet Union) at the Sixth Trade Union Congress in 1924

ordinary Congress on its own initiative at the request of one half of the all-Russian federations, or at the request of a number of federations the membership of which represents at least 50 per cent. of the total membership of the trade unions.

7. The A.C.C.T.U. shall be elected by the All-Russian Trade Union Congress. It shall include 89 members and 40 substitute members¹, who, in the absence of the former, shall replace them in deliberative capacity.

8. The A.C.C.T.U. shall select from among its members a president, a secretary, and a management board of 14 members and 6 substitute members, who, in the absence of the former, shall replace them in a deliberative capacity.

9. The A.C.C.T.U. shall meet at least once every three months. In special circumstances necessitating such action, the management board shall be entitled to convene a sitting of the A.C.C.T.U. In cases of special urgency the management board shall be entitled to convene a meeting of those members who are present in Moscow.

10. In order to supervise the administrative, economic and financial activities of the A.C.C.T.U., the All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions shall appoint a special committee composed of five members and two substitute members.

¹ The Seventh Congress increased these figures to 168 and 91 respectively

APPENDIX V

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF A CENTRAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE¹

I — THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

1. In the interval between Federal Congresses the directing organ of the union shall be the central committee, which shall act in accordance with the constitution of the union and the orders and regulations issued by the Federal Congress. The central committee shall be elected by the Federal Congress, which shall establish the number of its members and substitute members in each case. The maximum period of office of the central committee shall be two years (unions which hold an annual Congress shall elect their central committee for one year only).

2. The central committee shall be responsible for all its actions to the Federal Congress of the union and to the A.C.C.T.U.

3. The central committee shall meet at least once every four months.

Note. — In addition to ordinary sittings, special sittings may be held in conjunction with the representatives of the departmental sections (regional committees).

4. When a member is unable to be present at a general assembly of the central committee, he shall be replaced by a substitute member.

5. A member constantly failing to attend the sittings shall be replaced by a substitute member according to a list which shall be determined by a special order of the central committee.

6. Substitute members who are not called on to replace a full member shall be entitled to be present at the general assemblies of the central committee in a consultative capacity.

II. — DUTIES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

7. The duties of the general assembly of the central committee shall be as follows :

- (a) to elect from among its members the management board (præsidium) of the central committee, its president, and its secretary ;
- (b) to determine the internal constitution of the central committee ;
- (c) to take cognisance of the activity of the præsidium of the central committee and to fix the programme of its future labours ;

¹ *Izvestia*, Nos. 15-16, 1925.

- (d) to approve the budget of the central committee ;
- (e) to take cognisance of the measures taken by the economic organs in the domain of production and to examine such measures ;
- (f) to determine the character and the amount of the different funds allocated to special purposes ;
- (g) to fix the dates for the convening of Federal Congresses and Conferences, and to establish their agenda.

8. Members of the auditing committee shall be entitled to be present in a consultative capacity at the sittings of the central committee and the praesidium of the central committee.

III. — MANAGEMENT BOARD (PRAESIDIUM) OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

9. In order to deal with current business concerning the management of trade union activity, the central committee shall elect a management board (praesidium) from among its members ; the numerical composition of the praesidium shall be fixed by the general assembly of the central committee. The management board is responsible for its actions before the central committee.

10. As an executive organ of the central committee the praesidium shall be entitled :

- (a) to carry out all current business in accordance with the decisions of the Federal Congress, of the general assembly, of the central committee, and of the A.C.C.T.U. ;
- (b) to nominate, in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U., the representatives of the central committee in the various districts ;
- (c) to direct the work of local trade union organs, to publish orders, regulations, and instructions, and to regulate and direct the activities of the local trade union organs ;

Note. — All decisions of the praesidium or of the general assembly of the central committee which concern questions of principle shall be taken in agreement with the A.C.C.T.U. ;

- (d) to direct, unite and co-ordinate the work of the trade union sections ;
- (e) to conclude collective agreements ;
- (f) to establish a list of trade union leaders ;
- (g) to represent the central committee in all official and public trade union organisations and institutions ;
- (h) to organise conferences on all questions coming under the competence of the union ;
- (i) to occupy itself with the liaison work, accounts and information service of the trade union organs ;
- (j) to utilise, in accordance with instructions of the Federal Congress and the general assembly of the central committee, all trade union resources and central funds ;
- (k) to conclude all agreements and contracts in the name of the union ;
- (l) to authorise the organisation of strikes and fix the conditions of their settlement ;
- (m) to prepare reports on trade union activity ;

- (n) to publish newspapers, reviews, and books ;
- (o) to approve the budgets and reports of the departmental, regional, provincial, and central trade union managements ;
- (p) to transfer to the A.C.C.T.U. 10-15 per cent. of the sums attributed to the central committee from the members' contributions.

IV. — THE FEDERAL CONGRESS

11. The supreme directing organ of the union shall be the Federal Congress, which shall meet at least once every two years.

Note. — Extraordinary Congresses may be convened :

- (a) on the decision of the general assembly of the central committee ;
- (b) by the auditing commission, with the authorisation of the A.C.C.T.U. ;
- (c) at the demand of the union of a Republic, department, region, or area, which include at least one-third of the total number of paying members affiliated to the international committee ;
- (d) at the demand of the *præsidium* of the A.C.C.T.U.

12. For a Federal Congress a quorum shall be formed if the members present represent at least two-thirds of the paying members of the union.

13. The Federal Congress shall include representatives elected by the departmental, area, provincial, and republican conferences and congresses.

Note 1. — The central committee shall fix by special instructions the basis and rules of representation.

Note 2. — Full members and substitute members of the central committee and of the auditing committee shall be entitled, even if they have not been elected to the Congress, to be present in a consultative capacity.

14. The Federal Congress shall be entitled:

- (a) to take cognisance of the report on the activity of the central committee and to fix the character and the conditions of the future activity of the union, and to determine the principles of trade union structure ;
- (b) to take cognisance of the minutes of the auditing committee ;
- (c) to examine and settle the various questions of trade union competence (wages, workers' education, protection of labour, etc.) ;
- (d) to take cognisance of the reports of the official and economic organs ;
- (e) to elect delegates to international congresses ;
- (f) to elect full members and substitute members to the central committee of the union and to the auditing committee.

Note. — The A.C.C.T.U. reserves the right to annul all decisions of a Congress which departs from the general policy of the trade union movement.

V. — THE FEDERAL CONFERENCE

15. In the interval between two Congresses the central committee shall be entitled to convene Federal Conferences grouping the representatives of the local trade union organs in accordance with the standards fixed by the central committee.

16. The Conference shall be entitled :

- (a) to take cognisance of the report of the central committee ;
- (b) to trace the plan of the future activities of the central committee.

17. The decisions of the Conference shall not come into operation until they have been approved by the general assembly of the central committee.

VI. — FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

18. The financial resources of the central committee shall be composed of :

- (a) that part of the members' contributions which is transferred to it by the departmental sections and regional committees in a proportion varying from 5 to 25 per cent. ;
- (b) the funds in the possession of the provincial, regional and republican trade union organisations in excess of the budget approved by the central trade union committee.

VII. — SUPERVISION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

19. For the economic administration and financial control of the central committee the Federal Congress of the union shall elect a special committee composed of from three to five members and two substitute members.

20. The auditing committee shall submit a report on its labours to the Federal Congress, and shall give its opinion on the economic and financial report submitted by the central trade union committee.

21. The auditing committee shall submit a report on the economic and financial situation of the central committee to the conference of the union and to the general assembly of the central committee.

APPENDIX VI

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE FACTORY COMMITTEES AND THE LOCAL COMMITTEES¹

GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. A factory committee or local committee may be organised in all State, co-operative, and private undertakings employing at least 25 workers and salaried employees.

Note. — In an undertaking employing less than 25 workers and salaried employees, the factory committee shall be replaced by an authorised representative of the workers and salaried employees.

2. The factory committee is the organ of the trade union in the undertaking.

3. All workers and salaried employees of the undertaking who may be affiliated to the trade union shall be entitled to take part in the election of the factory committee: non-union members shall not be eligible to vote.

4. There shall be only one factory committee in each undertaking.

Note 1. — Independent undertakings situated in different districts may not, even if they are engaged in the manufacture of the same objects and under the same management, organise a common factory committee.

Note 2. — The management of the union shall be entitled to authorise a number of small-scale undertakings of like character to form a joint factory committee or local committee.

5. Entrusted with the enforcement of decisions and policy of the higher trade union organs, the factory committee shall be responsible for the execution of all work relating to trade union matters, and shall be required to give an account of its labours in this connection to the union and to the general or delegates' assemblies of the workers.

6. In so far as they are not contradictory to the decisions of the higher trade union organs, or to those of the general assembly of the workers in the undertakings, the decisions taken by the delegates' assembly are binding on the factory committee.

¹ *Isvestia*, Nos. 15 and 16, 1925.

DUTIES OF THE FACTORY COMMITTEE

7. The fundamental duties of the factory committee shall include the defence of the economic interests of the workers and salaried employees of the undertakings, the satisfaction of their material and intellectual requirements, the protection of labour, and the participation, in conjunction with the management of the undertaking, in the consideration of questions relating to the organisation of production. With these aims in view the factory committee shall :

- (a) participate in the conclusion of collective agreements and wages agreements relating to the undertaking, and shall supervise their application ; take steps to ensure the regular payment of wages and the fulfilment by the management of its obligations with respect to the protection of labour and social insurance and the payment of social insurance contributions ; appoint representatives to the joint committee and take steps to improve conditions of labour, housing, etc.
- (b) organise clubs, " Red " corners, conferences, theatrical representations, ensure the distribution of works received, collaborate in the struggle against illiteracy, and set up schools and courses for technical education.

8. While not interfering in any way or offering any resistance to the decisions of the management of the undertaking, the factory committee shall be entitled, so far as organisation of output is concerned :

- (a) to take part, in State and co-operative undertakings, in the consideration by the management of all the more important questions relating to the productive capacity of the undertakings.
- (b) to take steps to promote the regular progress of production in State and co-operative undertakings ;
- (c) to organise in State and co-operative undertakings lectures by the directorate to general assemblies and delegates and workshop meetings, and to the conferences on production, with a view to the diffusion among the staff of information concerning the working of the undertaking.
- (d) to participate in the management and dismissal of workers and salaried employees in accordance with the terms of the Labour Code, and in the application of collective agreements or wages agreements in force.

9. So far as trade union organisation is concerned, the factory committee is entitled :

- (a) to encourage the workers and salaried employees of the undertaking to join the trade union ;
- (b) to develop the revolutionary class consciousness of the workers and salaried employees ;
- (c) to help in the constitution of mutual aid funds ;
- (d) to introduce proletarian trade union discipline among the workers and salaried employees ;
- (e) to collect contributions and to transmit them to the union according to the established rules and regulations ;
- (f) to represent the workers and salaried employees in the divers organisations and institutions and to organise workers' elections in connection with such organisations and institutions.

10. The factory committee shall bring to the immediate notice of the trade union management all irregularities and abuses discovered in the administration of the undertaking, as well as all cases of misapprehension, which it shall endeavour to rectify.

STRUCTURE OF THE FACTORY COMMITTEE

11. The factory committee shall be elected for a period of six months by a general assembly of the workers and salaried employees of the undertaking. The number of its members shall vary according to the working strength of the undertaking as follows :

In undertakings employing from 25-100 persons : 3 members.

Ditto	100-300	„	5	„
Ditto.	300-1000	„	9	„
Ditto.	1000-5000	„	13	„
Ditto.	Over 5000	„	15	„

Note 1. — The renewal of the whole or part of the members of the factory committee before the expiry of their mandate may be proposed to a general or delegates' assembly at the request of at least one-third of the workers in the undertaking, or at the request of the trade union management.

Note 2. — In large undertakings where it is technically impossible to hold general assemblies, the trade union shall be entitled, with the approval of the central committee, to organise elections to the factory committee through the channels of a specially convened conference of representatives of the whole undertaking.

12. In order that its decisions may be valid, the electoral assembly shall include at least half of the workers and salaried employees of the undertaking, three days' previous notice of the date, place and purpose of the assembly having been given to the management of the union and to the workers and salaried employees of the undertaking.

Note. — If a quorum is not formed, the assembly shall be postponed to a later date, when, whatever the number of persons present, a quorum shall be considered as formed.

13. The number of members of the factory committee who are exempted from the ordinary work of the undertaking in order to transact trade union business shall be fixed as follows

Number of workers in the undertaking	Number of persons exempt	Duration of exemption
25- 50	1	A maximum of 2 days a week
50- 300	1	} Permanently
300-1,000	2	
1,000-5,000	3	
over 5,000	5	

Note. — In addition, members of the factory committees who are required to sit on the joint committee shall be granted exemption in accordance with a clause inserted in the collective agreement.

14. Any violation of election regulations by an electoral assembly shall entitle the management of the trade union to request the assembly to proceed to a new election.

15. The factory committees, local committees, or workers' accredited representatives shall be financed from the sums paid, in proportion to wages, by the management of the undertakings. The payments shall be made in accordance with a budget approved by the trade union concerned and within the limits established by the collective agreements, and may not exceed 2 % of the wages paid to the workers of the undertaking.

Sums earmarked for the maintenance of the factory committee shall be paid directly by the management of the undertaking (or institution) to the factory committee (local committee or accredited representative of the workers) at the time of payment of wages.

These sums shall cover the entire expenditure for the maintenance of the factory committee, including all remuneration of the members of the factory committee and its sub-committees. The management of the undertaking shall likewise be required to provide the factory committee with properly installed premises, including heating and lighting. In large undertakings where in addition to members of the factory committees exempted from work there are also a certain number of workshop delegates exempted from work, these latter shall be paid from the sums earmarked for the maintenance of the factory committee. If these sums are insufficient for this purpose, the difference shall be provided by the trade union.

WORK OF THE FACTORY COMMITTEE

16. In order to accomplish the duties entrusted to it, the factory committee shall set up sub-committees for the protection of labour, workers' education, etc. . . . It shall direct their activity and shall be responsible for them before the trade union and the general and delegates' assemblies.

Note. — The work of these committees shall be carried on outside the regular hours of work.

17. The factory committee and its sub-committees may, for their information, invite persons to be present at their sittings in a consultative capacity.

18. At the request of the trade union organs the factory committee shall appoint delegates to all trade union, economic, and Soviet institutions.

19. The factory committee shall hold at least one sitting a week outside the regular hours of work.

Note. — The current business shall be transacted within working hours by the members of the factory committee exempt from the ordinary work of the undertaking.

20. The decisions of the factory committee may be cancelled by general or delegates' assemblies and by the management of the union.

21. The factory committee shall convene a general assembly of the workers at least once a month. The general assembly shall examine the questions submitted to it by the factory committee and by the assembly itself and shall periodically take cognisance of the reports of the factory committee on its activity or a part of its activity.

22. Delegates' assemblies shall be convened at least once a fortnight. The powers of the delegates' assemblies shall be established by a special regulation approved by the central committee of the union.

SUPERVISION OF THE FACTORY COMMITTEE

23. For the control of the administrative, economic, and financial activities of the factory committee, the general assembly which elects the committee shall likewise nominate for a period of six months an auditing committee composed of 3 members. This committee shall examine at least once every three months the administrative, economic, and financial activities of the factory committee, and shall periodically submit reports relative to its supervision to the general assembly. The committee shall also transmit copies of its reports and findings to the management of the union.